

By  
Mrs.  
Loftie

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SOCIAL  
TWITTERS.

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SOCIAL TWITTERS.



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TO W. J. L., WITHOUT WHOSE HELP THESE  
ARTICLES WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN  
WRITTEN, THEY ARE NOW DEDICATED.

1057567



## PREFACE.

**I**N republishing articles written at different times on kindred subjects it is almost impossible that there should not be a certain amount of repetition. It is almost equally impossible to cut out paragraphs without re-writing the articles. These essays therefore remain for the most part as they appeared in the *Saturday Review*, from which they have been reprinted with the kind permission of the Editor.

M. J. L.

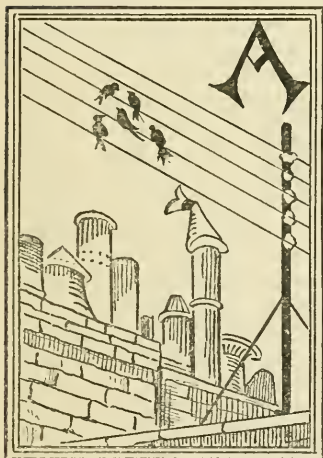
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# SOCIAL TWITTERS.

## PROPOSALS.



AN Irish girl who was very anxious that her scatterbrained brother should not be refused by a demure young Englishwoman with whom he had fallen desperately in love implored him to try and propose with a seriousness becoming the occasion. He vowed solemnly that he would behave as if he were acting the part of chief mourner at his father's funeral. The demure young

lady, in imitation of many of her countrywomen, graciously accepted her wild Irish lover. She however confided to her bosom friend that Edmund had proposed in rather an odd way. He had taken her after church to see the family vault, and had there, in a sepulchral voice, asked her if she would like to

lay her bones beside his bones. This he evidently thought was a fitting manner in which to fulfil the promise made to his sister of treating the matter with becoming solemnity. It was happily his first and last effort in that direction.

There must be many hundred thousand proposals made annually in the United Kingdom, but as the verb "to love" seems to admit of endless conjugations, perhaps we shall have ceased proposing, except by filling up a printed form, before all its variations are exhausted. At the commencement of each year the Registrar-General can foretell with tolerable accuracy how many of Her Majesty's subjects will enter into the bonds of holy matrimony before its conclusion. A more than usually abundant harvest might increase the number beyond his calculations, or a war might depress them; still his average would not be very far astray. But what Registrar-General can tell us the average number of proposals which are made each year, or how many rejections go to make one marriage? Indeed it is by no means easy to define exactly what is and what is not to be called a proposal. When a man says to a girl with whom he has waltzed several times that, if ever he becomes a Benedict, he hopes his wife will exactly resemble her and dress precisely as she does, if the girl answers "You must ask papa," there may reasonably be a difference of opinion as to whether the pretty speech can be twisted into a proposal or not. When, however, a shy man, having got his mother to plead his cause, says to the beloved one, with a tremulous gasp, "Won't you do the thing my mother asked you?" there is no doubt that to all intents and purposes he has asked her to be his wife. Proposals do not necessarily precede marriage, any more than does marriage necessarily succeed a proposal, and many a servant-maid becomes a wife without the young man with whom she has kept company



for so many alternate Sundays ever asking her in plain words. Much of the romance of love-making has, in fact, disappeared since the number of marrying men has become so small in comparison with the number of women who wish to become wives. A disagreeable fellow with twenty thousand a year may not be able to win the particular duke's daughter on whom he has set his heart, but he will not be condemned to a bachelor existence because he cannot find plenty of pretty young ladies ready to accept his name, and help him to spend his fortune.

It is not uncommon to hear a mother detail to her friends how Mr. Longacres would have proposed to dear May, but that really, owing to the most extraordinary complication of circumstances, he never got an opportunity; and that now he is married to a designing little fortune-hunter, and is miserable. She tells how one day he got so far as to propound a riddle to May, which, if she had only been able to guess it, would have certainly led the way to a declaration of his affection. Indeed it really did amount to a proposal, for what could be more plain than saying, "My first is myself, my second is a plaything, my whole you are"? Of course if a woman is a man's idol he wants to marry her. But poor May became so agitated by the way in which Mr. Longacres looked at her that, although she had heard the riddle before, and recollected its answer the moment he was gone, the opportunity was unfortunately gone also. Then the mother goes on to say that she is quite sure one of Violet's lovers intended to come to the point in returning from the Derby, but he lost so many dozen pair of gloves from having backed the favourite that he also lost his temper. He scarcely spoke to any one the whole way home, although she had taken care to give him an excellent luncheon and the driest of champagne. The next week he was ordered abroad, so of course had only time to say a hurried good-by.

Generally speaking, this idea of men not being able to find opportunities to tell their love is arrant nonsense. A man may sometimes not propose where he fears to be refused, but when he wishes for a Yes, and is pretty certain he will get it, the question does not remain unasked, no matter what the difficulties which have to be overcome. There is no place where the ardent lover, if such a being still exists, cannot tell his tale. There are no circumstances, serious or gay, which cannot be turned to good account by a skilful wooer. True, many men are neither ardent nor skilful, and contrive almost to insult a woman while paying her the highest compliment in their power. But others know exactly when and where to press their suit with success. A young parson travelling in Palestine, and asked to join a pleasant party, amongst whose numbers he found a notable heiress of passionate piety, did well to restrain the expression of the ardour of his affection until he found himself lying at her feet on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, looking towards Jerusalem. Scarcely any girl with a spark of religion or poetry in her composition could have said No to a white tie and a pair of handsome brown eyes under such well-chosen circumstances. The officer whose leave had nearly expired without his having been able to bring a pretty little coquette to the point of acknowledging that she cared for him even a little wee bit, was not unwise to take her, ostensibly for the purpose of sketching, to the top of the church tower, to lock the staircase door, put the key in his pocket, and vow that if she did not promise solemnly to marry him within a month he would throw himself off the parapet before her eyes, key and all. Of course he gained his point, for he frightened her into tears, and then had things all his own way.

More than one proposal has been made by underscoring the lines in the marriage service, "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?" and passing

the book and a pencil during the sermon to the adored one. It sometimes comes back with a faint but still visible stroke under the "I will." It is curious how at least the semblance of religious feeling is apt to get mixed up with love-making ; not of course to the absurd point of asking a blessing before each kiss, and returning thanks afterwards, but a case of breach of promise scarcely ever comes to be tried that, when the letters of the defendant are read, they are not found crammed with prayers and texts. The piety was probably as real as the love, and both were genuine for the time being, and took wing together. A sort of revivalist religion seems somehow mysteriously allied to the tender passion, although truth-telling, which is supposed to be a Christian virtue, is a rare accompaniment. A great many recording angels could be kept fully employed in booking the fabrications, conscious or unconscious, with which a large proportion of proposals are embellished. But we will not try to bring a blush to the cheeks of those who remember their misdeeds in this direction. It is often well even to act a little romance, if it gives pleasure and can be kept up.

Although circumstances will not prevent a man who is in earnest, and who has every reason to expect a favourable reply, from trying his luck, still circumstances are the cause of many a proposal. Upon some trivial event, scarcely noticed at the time, has often turned the happiness or misery of many more people than the pair immediately concerned. An elderly man who is ridiculously fond of children has for some reason been prevented from marrying. He travels by chance with a charming little boy and girl, and thinks what he would not give to be able to carry them home with him. He looks at the mother of the children, whom he has scarcely before noticed ; she has a mysterious little white cap inside her bonnet, which proclaims that she is a widow, but not a very recent one. He brightens up ; it is like a fairy tale ; they find they

have "mutual friends"; he proposes as soon as he decently can, but is wise enough to say nothing about the children, except that he hopes to make a good parent. He vows, like every one else, that this is the first time he was ever really in love, and that he fell a victim the moment he looked at her.

A gentleman once confided to an old friend who asked him to tell "all about his marriage," that the wife of his bosom had attained that enviable position simply by choosing at a supper-table blanc-mange instead of whipped-cream. He had paid the girl such marked attentions on several occasions that he felt she was warranted in expecting him to ask her to marry him. He had no desire to have her for a wife, but he resolved, while dancing with her at a ball, that she should become the unconscious arbiter of her own fate—in fact, that he would toss with her in dishes instead of half-crowns. Had she said whipped-cream, he would have withdrawn from her acquaintance with a peaceful conscience, and never thought of her again, except to congratulate himself on his escape. If an old bachelor has been staying at a country house where there is a very pretty governess to whom he has been courteous and kind—if, having said good-by to her in her lonely schoolroom, he should discover when he got downstairs that he had left his gloves on her table, and hurrying back for them find her in a confused mass amongst the sofa-cushions, sobbing convulsively—he must in common decency ask her what is the matter, even insist on knowing. If she replies that her tears flow because she has no home, what alternative has he but to try to comfort her, lose his train, and ask her to share his home even if that be only lodgings? Every one knows numberless instances where a broken bone or even a sick headache has led to a proposal, and shipwrecks and railway accidents are sometimes excellent match-makers.

## ENGAGED.

It was asserted last season by ill-natured dowagers that several young ladies became engaged to their friends without any idea of marriage. If this was really a true count, it shows that English belles can be wise in their generation. They see the numerous advantages enjoyed by their engaged acquaintances, and think that they may as well put in their thumbs and pull out plums for themselves, leaving the dry crust of matrimony to others. Several unpleasant revelations were made lately which tend to prove that many women would, if they were allowed, turn marriage itself into a mere engagement. The exemption from disagreeable duties, the comparative freedom from social restraints enjoyed by a girl who is engaged, are certainly to be envied. It is no wonder that those who are not admitted to such privileges should try to obtain them by a kind of fraud upon society. In America, and even in Canada, girls are not driven to this expedient. There they can take a man on trial. They can go with him to theatres and parties, just as in this country the servant-maids can do with their young men while they are openly keeping company. Young ladies feel a craving for such comradeship, and look with envy at the cook as she takes her Sunday out, and enjoys the society of a man whom, after all, she is not bound to marry. Under certain circumstances, engagement appears very preferable to marriage in a girl's eyes. Her parents may be wealthier than her suitor, and her home happy. She has comfort without care. All she wants is a little more liberty, and this she obtains by an engagement. She immediately finds that men cease to be afraid of her, and pay her an amount of attention to

which she has hitherto been unaccustomed. She can refuse a disagreeable partner at a ball, as there is a name available for all blanks on her card. She has the use of an escort without scandal, and if she likes it, she may wear out her old clothes, as her trousseau is supposed to be in progress. If she is staying away from home, she need not appear downstairs all the morning, as she is assumed to be busy receiving and writing love-letters. Men have no share in these advantages, and it is not surprising that they should uniformly wish to shorten the term of probation. They may not flirt, and they find presents even more expensive than their tailor. Constant fetching and carrying becomes monotonous, and they soon notice a great falling off in the number of their invitations to dinner or the battue. The male lover has to bear all the irksomeness of the situation. He has early used up his stock of pretty phrases. He cannot have the "first kiss" twice over. He begins to grow critical about dress and manners, sensitive to the impression his beloved may make upon his friends, and having exhausted the round of pre-nuptial bliss, will begin to cool in his ardour unless he is very delicately handled, and the difficult road to matrimony carefully smoothed before him. It is at this point that many couples wreck their happiness, and, though lovers' quarrels may renew love in a majority of cases, resort to such an expedient must be very cautiously made, and the intending bride ought to be very sure of her lover before she tries it. In fact, looking at the question from a purely philosophical point of view and without bias, it may be a serious question whether a quarrel ever "pays." If it is not perfectly real it is obviously a failure, and if it is real it may be final. The young lady who tries such a stimulant must either be very sure of her lover, in which case he does not require it; or she doubts him, in which case he will

probably escape. We cannot recommend quarrels, then, even with high classical authority in their favour, and, when investigating the natural history and habits of the engaged, we may for practical purposes leave them wholly aside.

The conduct of engaged couples does not differ as widely as we might expect, so many are the conventional rules appointed to be observed on these occasions. Now and then we meet with a proud girl who refuses to be congratulated in the ordinary form, and who turns the subject or leaves the room when her approaching marriage is mentioned. For the most part such girls are really in love, and cannot bear to have what they look upon as sacred touched by rude fingers. It is torture to be made the subject of quizzing and feeble jokes. A sense of delicacy revolts from profiting by the opportunities made for the lovers' meeting, and prying eyes render her position embarrassing and intolerable. Sometimes, too, a girl professes complete indifference to her intended husband. She will not be seen speaking to him. She openly laughs at sentiment, and denies the existence of true love. She sneers at moonlight walks, and keeps her engaged ring loose in her work-basket. Yet her feelings, such as they are, may be well calculated to stand the test of time and matrimony.

It is perhaps more pleasing to watch the behaviour of the young girl who is delighted with her lover and her prospects. You are expected to congratulate her, not as a matter of form, but as it were spontaneously. You may see no great reason for congratulation. If a brilliant prospect is before her, you may think a different prospect might have been yet more brilliant. Her charms, you think, are such that she is almost thrown away upon the commonplace object of her choice. You cannot see his perfections from her point of view, and would look forward to spending a



lifetime in his company with anything but pleasure. But you cannot reveal such feelings to the bride-elect, let your knowledge of her be ever so intimate. She would think you cruel, hard-hearted, nay, worse than all, matter-of-fact. The mere suspicion of common sense would destroy all the charm of the romance in her mind. She receives your congratulations with undisguised pleasure, and evidently believes all you can possibly invent or say as to her good luck, her future happiness, her certainty of an exemplary husband. She would take it almost amiss if you hinted that the luck was all the other way, and that you look upon her lover as more fortunate than herself. She expects you to see through her eyes or not at all, and as she takes off her glove you know that she wishes you to admire a diamond ring on her third finger, and to ask for the photograph of her swain to place opposite to her own in your book. These little traits are shown only at the first. As time goes on, she settles down to a more prosaic view of things. If you are in her confidence, she expects you to sit beside her and ask for biographical particulars concerning her intended, and to give her advice as to the management of her future household. After a longer interval even these topics cease to be touched, and she gradually becomes more like other people, always retaining a certain sense of her importance, and taking precedence in the family circle even of her elder sisters. But it is to members of her own sex that she is more especially interesting. Your partner at a ball or a dinner-table, if you remark on another lady of the party, very often adds to her account the almost whispered remark that she is engaged. This is always said with a certain emphasis, as if it must be a point of the last importance. Though you should admire her yourself, the chances are that you do not feel particularly impressed by the information. Engaged, you reflect, does not



mean married. But apparently, and to judge from the way the engagement is spoken of, it means even more ; and if you venture to talk flippantly about love and marriage, you will probably be very shortly and severely reprov'd.

The behaviour of the engaged couple affords the idle spectator much food for amusing reflection ; and not their behaviour only, but that of the family towards them. If they enter a room together, every one flies from it immediately as if they had the smallpox. If you come upon them in the library alone, you may not so much as pause to find your book, but must precipitately retreat, taking care to shut the door. The gentleman does not always seem to enjoy these conditions. He may not find conversation very ready to hand, and may even like the society of others of his own sex. He may look back regretfully to the time when he could talk to her sisters, or rather when they were still willing to talk to him. He may be so cold-blooded as to anticipate a time when he and his wife will see almost too much of each other. When they go out to walk or ride he may prefer the company of the elder sister, who is a horsewoman ; or of the younger, who sketches. He may like the singing of one, the wit of another, or possibly even the looks of a third. But he is not allowed to enjoy any of these things. Sisters who are loyal to each other would consider it shocking. He is bound to the one and the one only, and it is sad to see him sometimes when a stampede takes place at his coming, as he hopelessly looks after the retreating figures, and seats himself with an ill-suppressed yawn by the side of the engaged one. Hardly less trying is the fate of the lover who finds himself taken as a brother by the whole family at once, who has to kiss all his new sisters, and submit to the same familiarity, and even the same lectures, which their real brothers bear so badly. He cannot

call them "girls" with a contemptuous accent on the word, nor can he shake himself loose from their embraces with "rubbish" or a stronger expression. They give him commissions to execute in town which their brothers have long ago refused to undertake, and expect him to pay out of his own pocket for everything he gets them. In fact, he finds his position very unenviable; and if he fails to divert their attention by bringing a friend upon the scene as a second victim to the family charms, he probably offends his ladylove by confiding to her that he is not engaged to all her sisters as well as to her, and only intends to marry one of the family. In some houses a different kind of trial awaits the happy pair. They are never left alone together. Some mothers keep up the chaperon system in all its rigour till the knot is indissolubly tied. Perhaps, much as they dislike it, the mother is wise in this. Those stolen kisses are very sweet, those squeezes of the hand at parting, those brief glances, those chance meetings which have about them so much of a delightful, naughty flavour. In one respect, however, not even parents of this kind are hard-hearted. The young people can correspond, and, on the lady's side at least, this is no small privilege. Edwin does not find it easy perhaps to write letters which do not wear any air of business about them, and wastes much paper and ink in notes which he tears up unsent. But Angelina scribbles away. While she is thus engaged an awe-struck hush pervades the morning-room. She must not be interrupted on any account. The sisters talk in a whisper, and if they wonder what on earth she can have to write in such quantities, they keep the wonder to themselves, only wishing their own turn may come soon. She covers side after side without a pause, and it is well if she does not cross. In her letters to them when she has been absent from home, one sheet of paper widely written more than sufficed;

but now it seems as if time only failed ; and yet she always complains, when the post is gone, that she has left out what she most wanted to say. To the effects of an engagement indeed, more or less definite, we are inclined to attribute three-fourths at least of the immense mass of manuscript sent daily to modern magazines. Young ladies develop suddenly a love of literature, and it must be confessed that, considering how little they have to say, it is strange how well they say it and at what length. It is happy, indeed, for everybody concerned when the engagement comes to its natural end, when the charming bride finds out that her husband is much like other husbands, and when letter-writing gives place to household cares.

## NEOGAMS.

In almost all countries, Christian and heathen, a certain amount of horseplay and roughness, amounting even in cases to cruelty, is the portion of newly-married couples. But in England only does fashion tyrannize so harshly as to prescribe the wedding tour. At a time when most people would seek quiet and seclusion, publicity is forced upon them, and they are made conspicuous even by the way they are hurried on their travels. Woes enough are in store for them without the additional inflictions of society. They are likely enough to make each other miserable without being tortured with specially invented troubles. But we never think of their feelings in the ordering of the wedding festivities. By long custom, a custom founded perhaps in the scorn with which we look at people who make fools of themselves, we condemn the bride and bridegroom to many petty annoyances which might easily be avoided. They would, no doubt, be avoided did people take the famous advice to

“marry early, yes, marry early—and marry often.”  
• But others will not learn by our experience; and, for the present at least, there is little hope that any reform is contemplated. We condemn the unfortunate couple to a kind of seclusion under circumstances which would try the deepest affection and irritate the sweetest temper. When Hodge and his sweetheart crown their pastoral loves in the quiet old country church, they enjoy a walk in their finery and white cotton gloves, and then take possession of the cot beside the wood, and settle down at once to connubial comfort. But they have chances of happiness denied to their richer neighbours. It is a matter almost of moral duty, certainly of superstitious strictness, that when the squire marries the rector’s daughter, or my lord marries my lady, the first month of married life must be passed in the discomfort of foreign hotels, or the still less endurable desolation of English inns, as if to strain to the utmost the strength of their newly-made bonds. Now and then, it is true, a bridegroom rebels. He has perhaps been married before, and does not forget his old experiences. When the carriage comes round, and his bride and he, amid showers of slippers and rice and other senseless manifestations of the inanity of the wedding guests, step in and are whirled away, he drives out by one gate and, after a short excursion over the hills, returns by the other, treading on the heels of the departing. But such a contrivance requires considerable forethought. Papa and mamma must be persuaded to wink at it. There cannot be an evening ball, and the junior branches of the family must be despatched elsewhere under various excuses. Most men contemplate some such escape from the tyranny of usage, but few there be that can accomplish the fulfilment of their scheme.

My lord sometimes borrows a friend’s house, and exchanges the prying glances of waiters for those of

private domestics ; but his fate is little different from that of his less distinguished neighbour ; and when modern mothers grumble at the decline of matrimony among eligible young men, they forget that many a man who would walk coolly to the cannon's mouth, or even undergo the amount of ceremonial required by the social usages of a village, cannot, even if he would, face the long and bitter agony of a fashionable wedding—the preparations, the bridesmaids' lockets, the settlements, the bishop and three other clergymen, the sexton, the dreary mirth of the breakfast, the speeches, the presents, and finally the four white horses, the down-drawn blinds, the railway station, the luggage, the horrors of the middle passage, and the yawning desolation of the honeymoon.

The foreign tour has, on the whole, its advantages in comparison with Killarney or the Isle of Wight. Neogams are not so easily recognised abroad. They only come from England, and in their English shape do not occur of French, German, or Italian growth. There is some chance therefore of escaping from the curious gaze of people to whom everything connected with matrimony has a strange attraction, and who would go out of their way at any time to stare at a newly-married couple. A happy delusion is sometimes nursed to the effect that the recent nuptials are a profound secret to the outer crowd, among whom the victims would conceal themselves. But there are too many experienced eyes at the accustomed resorts ; the young people, labouring under such a delusion, are sometimes tempted to the imprudence of an evening stroll along the Dover pier on their way to France, and to fancy the loungers may disregard them or think they are Darby and Joan of many years' standing. The bridal satin and the blue frock-coat have been laid aside ; a quiet travelling costume has been assumed, but the disguise is not sufficient. The relative

position of the young lady in the new Ulster and the tight boots to the young gentleman who looks so uneasily conscious in his smart shooting suit is manifest to all that infest the pier ; and our unfortunate couple are only too glad to escape from the staring eyes outside to the scarcely repressed congratulations of the landlord within, and the obsequious but significant attentions of the smiling waiters. Unpleasant as is their brief sojourn in their native land, their next step is still more unpleasant. The crossing has somehow to be performed. They may wait a day, or even two, for favourable winds ; but sooner or later they must go, and a shower of small troubles attends their start. The bridegroom is distracted by his new responsibilities. He may have travelled with his sisters, but always found somebody only too willing to assist him in dispositions for their comfort. His new wife and her maid are wholly dependent on him, and while he feels he could provide for the former, he fears and hates the maid. In his hurry to catch the early boat he leaves his cigars on his dressing-table ; shall he be able to smoke the cigars he can obtain at Calais ? The bill has extended to fancy dimensions, and he is foolishly conscious of having had to pay for his peculiar and novel position. He has an idea, confirmed by the subsequent inspection of his purse, that in the dim twilight of the morning he has dealt out sovereigns instead of shillings to the boots and porter. The new maid, too, racked with concern for the safety of all their lives in crossing the sea, of whose raging billows she has so often heard with awe, has forgotten the chlorodyne. No remedy is provided for the inevitable sea-sickness, and she is uncertain whether her mistress's new travelling-bag, with the gilt fittings, has been left in the hotel or stowed away to take its rough chance with heavier luggage. The troubles of the shore, however, are soon forgotten, as the steamer bounds merrily

“on a breeze from the northward free”: the bridegroom points to the white cliffs, and quotes Scott to the bride. She looks exceedingly pretty; the bright sunshine dances on the sparkling waves, and standing with his arm round her the proud husband shows his high spirits by wishing the recipients of his sovereigns joy of their windfall, and by facetious remarks on the appearance of the other passengers, interspersed with brief exhibitions of aquatic knowledge, and the use of yachting and naval terms. Before long, however, certain white-crested waves appear upon the sparkling waters, and very soon the gay looks and sprightly conversation flag. A more taciturn period succeeds, and a snug corner amidships is secured with pleasure and made comfortable by rugs and wraps. But the steamer is now in mid-channel, and begins to perform such evolutions as materially to diminish the happiness of our couple. She no longer dances over the waves; but the poor little bride experiences those gradual risings to unexpected altitudes, that sliding along the surface when a descent was expected, and finally, that awful sinking to remote depths, accompanied by an extra groan from the funnel, which thrills through her frame, and finally overcomes her. Long time, however, she battles bravely with the inclemency of the element. So much the greater her ultimate break-down. In the absence of the trusted chlorodyne she nibbles desperately at a captain’s biscuit and sips some brandy from her husband’s flask, in the forlorn hope of staving off the inevitable. The smell of oil becomes oppressive, the monotonous throbbing of the engines is wearisome, there is a sound of a fellow-passenger in distress, the busy stewards ply their daily cares, and all is over. The husband holds out longer, but only to add another to the horrors of his position. His feelings are put to a severe test as he sees that his dearest one is suffering and that he



cannot relieve her ; but his affection itself is tried when he observes, as he cannot help observing, before the hand of sickness is laid upon him also, that the bloom of her cheek has been replaced by an ashy paleness, her rosy lips have turned blue-grey, her charming hat is cocked recklessly at an unbecoming angle, and he recalls with uneasy conscience the words he has so often sung in the days of devotion, the vows of constancy to endearing young charms, now that they seem indeed to fleet in his arms like fairy gifts fading away. If five minutes of sea-sickness can work such a change, what will be the case after years and misfortunes have made the present appearances permanent? But he feels that on this occasion the sufferings of the beloved one demand from him at least a show of tenderness in the inverse proportion to his diminishing admiration, and he ventures to offer such comfort as she may derive from being asked "how she feels." But all the reply is a melancholy shake of the head, and a roll of eyes which look already as if they had been boiled. Speech is dangerous, not to say impossible ; and, but for the impending crisis of his own interior, who knows how far the gloom of the moment might not hurry him? After the first paroxysm is over he remembers that they have come provided with a domestic. To her care he will confide his suffering bride, and, betaking himself to the comparative retirement of the fore-castle, will try if he can to think of happier scenes. But where is the maid? Helpless though he feels as respects his wife, and queer as respects himself, he searches in vain, till the maid is at last discovered in the noisome recesses of the ladies' cabin in a state of total collapse.

Such are the ordinary conditions under which a newly-married couple begin matrimonial life ; and during those early weeks sad memories are laid up of provoking mistakes, of trunks which will not pack, of



trains which will not wait, of bonnets which cannot be tied under half an hour, of tiresome sight-seeing, of broiling sun, of headache, and, alas, sooner or later, of ill temper, and even a quarrel. The maid who was to be a comfort has proved only a trouble. Her knowledge of foreign tongues is confined to the occasional use of "Polly voo Ongley?" and her nerves have required quite as much care as those of her mistress. She has left something behind at every stopping-place, and is herself abandoned on a Paris platform when the young couple start for Geneva. By telegraphy and the police she is eventually recovered alive, and has, perhaps, once or twice been of use as a buffer. But, on the whole, the experiences of a honeymoon abroad are not of an encouraging kind. Impatience and trouble are not helps in learning mutual forbearance and the value of home quiet; but differences of opinion, incompatibilities of temper, fretfulness, and above all weariness of each other, which, if they ever sprang into being, might have easily been hidden, under better conditions, have come forward into the full light of day, and the honeymoon is the prelude to a married life in which indifference will rank almost as a virtue. Indifference may be attained by various means; it visits the cottage as well as the castle; but the honeymoon too often secures it, and many a bridegroom but just returned from a "delightful tour on the Continent" will be able to sympathise in the remark of the country farmer to a companion in the train as he went to town to buy hay:—"Yes, it's been a bad winter for some folk. Old Smith's dead, and so is Jones, and my wife died yesterday. And how be the hay, master?"

## TRAVELLING.

Thousands of people think it necessary to travel, but few are able to enjoy travelling as they might. They take an autumn tour on the Continent, spend a winter on the Nile, or even go round the world with Mr. Cook. The recollections many of them bring back are only of the little discomforts from which they have suffered on the way. They remember all about the train for which they were too late, but nothing of the curious old town they explored while waiting for another. They can give a full account of the number of courses served at the Louvre Hôtel dinner, but would not know a photograph of Notre Dame from one of the Madeleine, unless the names were printed beneath. They can discourse feelingly about the journey when the luncheon was left behind, but have forgotten all about the picturesque country through which they passed. The highest mountains and deepest ravines could not attract their attention or stop them from grumbling at the temporary discomfort of missing one meal.

There are a great many things required to make a perfect traveller. By a perfect traveller we mean a person who enjoys himself to the full, and almost forces those with whom he comes in contact to do the same. He must have a good temper and a perfect digestion, a love of scenery, and sympathy with his fellow-creatures. He must not require, like the snail, to carry all his home arrangements about with him, but be able to make himself at home even in a dusty railway carriage. He must have a liberal education and strong eyesight. He ought to be able to fast when necessary, and to feast when he gets the opportunity; to enjoy a comfortable bed, or, if needful, to sleep on the floor. He must remember to pack up his toothbrush and soap, and not lose

sight of his umbrella. He must have a watch that keeps time, and a pocket in which his ticket may always to be found. He should know how to make himself comfortable, or to put up cheerfully with discomforts which cannot be avoided. To such a traveller everything seems to give pleasure. What he has seen before he is glad to see again, and to verify his recollection. What is new he finds full of fresh interest. Each *table d'hôte* will be a pleasing excitement; he may meet a friend, he will almost certainly make one. In any case he will discover plenty to amuse him in watching his neighbours. In frequented places there will no doubt be a collection of the usual well-known types, but they will always exhibit a certain variety, which may prevent them from becoming altogether monotonous. There will be a beautiful and elegantly dressed American girl, with her obedient and assiduously attentive mother as lady-in-waiting. She may talk about being "pretty crowded" when you offer her another peach, but she will have plenty of shrewd things to say well worth listening to. There will be the shoddy American family talking through their noses; but if you take a quiet smoke with the 'cute Yankee who has "struck oil," the views he expresses upon things social and political will be worth remembering and be food for thought. There will be the typical American child who asks for everything, but will only eat what is unwholesome and sure to make him sick, who drinks champagne and *café noir*, and talks the whole time of dinner in a shrill penetrating treble, but probably in excellent French. He spills the salt-cellar, to the consternation of the superstitious old Scotchwoman, who watches the urchin's behaviour with unconcealed amazement; and, by upsetting the *vin ordinaire*, spoils the only decent dress she has brought with her. A meek country clergyman sent abroad for his throat, clothed in fine black cloth,

and with the largest and whitest of ties, may be seen sitting beside a Queen's chaplain in a well-worn shooting suit and scarlet neckerchief. There will be Jews with many gold rings and much assurance not of a religious kind, and undergraduates taking their first tour. There will be the German officer with his black and white button, who tears his meat with his fingers ; and the Frenchman with his crimson rosette, who takes a toothpick from the bundle, and when he has used it calmly replaces it for the next comer. There will be Russians conversing in all European languages with equal facility, and Englishwomen talking the horrible jargon which they believe to be French. One and all will contribute something to entertain the man who is ready to be amused.

The great mistake which most people make about travelling is that they travel without any object except that of doing as other people do. They think they must follow certain routes, adhere to a certain routine, and see certain things, even if they do not interest them in the least. Those who never care to look at a picture at home spend days in wearily dragging themselves through interminable picture galleries. They may be seen standing bored to death before the masterpieces of Tintoret and Veronese. Those who do not know whether their own parish church is Norman or Tudor, and moreover do not care a straw, spend weeks in rushing from one cathedral town to another, vainly trying to remember which had a campanile and which a baptistery, so that they may have some new dinner talk when they return from abroad. Those who can barely distinguish a manuscript from a printed book will take the greatest trouble to obtain introductions to all the principal librarians in Europe, who will be expected to waste valuable time in showing them treasures which they can neither appreciate nor understand. All this is very foolish, and a useless waste of

time and money. Almost every one has some taste, and is capable of enjoying something which travelling can procure for him. If a man is fond of his garden at home, but does not know a Titian from a Greuze, why does he pretend to look at pictures when he goes abroad, instead of trying to see some fine gardens, and to find out what new plants he could acclimatize? He will always be able to get hints, even from those who may not know so much as he does himself, and, what he will find still more pleasant, he may air his favourite theories before an audience who have not heard them at every public dinner and every magistrates' meeting in his county for twenty years. If a country gentleman likes turnips and mangold wurtzel, and is great upon the fattening of pigs, there is nothing to be ashamed of in so useful a taste; and when he travels let him stop at country places, and see how the inhabitants farm, and find out what different breeds of cattle are kept in different provinces. There is no occasion for him to stare at early stained glass until his eyes ache, or spend hours in the catacombs listening to a lecture on the primitive Christians, when he would rather be in a pigstye. One man takes an interest in social questions such as pauperism and compulsory education, but does not in the least care what particular ornament was discovered on the vases last dug up at Pompeii. Why should he pretend to do so? He can easily get introductions to native reformers, who will show him how the poor are housed and take him to as many schools and prisons as he likes to inspect. Another may care more for a beetle or a butterfly than for the most hardened criminal or the most illiterate peasant; but he too, by the operation of the same law, will probably confine his attention to early Italian reliefs and Etruscan inscriptions.

Of all the senseless and provoking people who travel, middle-class Englishwomen of a certain age are perhaps

the chief. One always feels ashamed of them out of their own country. They can readily be recognised abroad by their dress. It is either dowdy, *outré*, or the ugliest development possible to imagine of the reigning fashion. They seem to think anything good enough in which to travel, yet they have probably twice as much luggage as the Frenchwoman, who always looks so neat. They drive their husbands or fathers crazy with the number of their boxes, yet never seem able to extract from their depths anything in which they are fit to be seen. They travel in a blue serge costume of the ugliest possible shade of colour. It is trimmed with quantities of thick heavy braid, which is always getting torn and hanging off in untidy loops. They wear brown hats, with feathers which have long ceased to show the slightest inclination to curl. They buy hideous boots with elastic sides, which are so uncomfortable that they are obliged to take them off in the railway carriage, and cannot get them on again when they arrive at their destination. They will not provide themselves with a couple of white dressing-gowns, which are easily washed and delightful to put on when they arrive hot and tired. On Sundays they appear at the *table d'hôte* in an old crushed black silk, and perhaps, that horror of horrors, a white "Garibaldi." They have their reward in feeling undeniably respectable. They are proudly conscious of looking like nothing but Englishwomen, and with this consciousness are more than satisfied. They are most careful to whom they speak, and think everything to which they are unaccustomed extraordinary and contemptible. They ladle out Ruskin diluted in tepid water, and read Mrs. Jameson at great length before pictures at which they have no time to look. They will not kneel down in a Roman Catholic church, though they have gone to hear mass, nor will they bow politely to the benighted foreigner who is so foolish as to take off his hat when

he passes them on the staircase. Returning to their native country as narrow, as ignorant, and as prejudiced as when they left it, they are more unbearable, for the conceit of travel is added to their other disagreeable qualities. They complain of discomforts which they might easily have avoided by a little forethought and common sense; they grumble at mistakes which only occurred because they were unpardonably ignorant of even that small quantity of French which will carry one anywhere on the Continent.

When a large party intend to travel together it will save much trouble and fatigue if a couple of the most capable are told off, one to see after the engaging of rooms, the other to order the food required. When a hungry party arrive late at an hotel cold and tired, or hot and tired, as the case may be, it is distressing to see how long they often take to make up their minds what they will have for supper. The weakest and most starving have to wait for the rest. But see a pair of Frenchmen in a similar case. At once the inevitable omelette is provisionally ordered. A *fricandeau* cold from the *table d'hôte* helps them on. Cheese, salad, fruit, and some biscuits finish a very sufficient repast before their English fellow-travellers have spelled out half the carte. We may wonder how foreigners can be content to live under "such a government," but they may well wonder how we can continue to exist without finding out how to feed ourselves.

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## NEW HOUSES.

THERE are many agents in London who combine the trade of letting houses with that of making coffins. The two employments do not at first sight seem to have any affinity, but in a new suburb where streets are being run up by contract and inhabited before they are dry, such a combination is natural enough. Indeed, in the hands of an intelligent and enterprising man the two employments might be dovetailed with the happiest results. At least one death may reasonably be expected out of every large family settling down in a damp new house. It may only be the baby, but that will be better than none. If the family happens to come from Ireland or the west coast of Scotland, the Darwinian law will have enabled them to acquire some of the properties of india-rubber. They would possibly be damp-proof, and therefore not desirable tenants. Such applicants a judicious house-agent will naturally refuse. In other cases he may not only hope to profit in his capacity of undertaker by some one taking a fatal cold in the damp cemetery, but at every well-conducted funeral he may inveigle new victims for the handsome-looking streets still in the hands of the builders, and perhaps induce his clients to enter them while the plaster is still wet upon the nine-inch walls. Doctors are, however, even more indebted to damp walls than either house-agents or undertakers. It is said that when a young medical man of fair ability and pleasing manners wishes to settle down in London,



his wisest course is to choose some semi-fashionable district where showy houses with bow-windows, pillared porticoes, and thin walls are being run up. If the soil on which the houses are being built is clay, so much the better for the young doctor; if the level of the ground is little above that of the Thames, his prospects are yet more brilliant. He may safely marry for love; for although the fees he will receive may not seem overwhelmingly large, he will be certain of constant employment. He may never become a renowned specialist or physician in ordinary to a member of the Royal Family, but while he is still a young man he will be able to set up his carriage without borrowing money, and he will not find it difficult to insure his life handsomely for his children. But in order to realize this pleasing picture he must secure for his own habitation an old and well-built house. When he is tired of life it will be time enough to take a new one. Few people except the Wandering Jew have the constitution of the nobleman who is said to have lived for many years almost rent-free by constantly moving from one new house to another. His friends thought he was suffering from some obscure disease of the brain, but the builders' agents found him a capital decoy duck. As soon as they told a wavering client that Lord So-and-so had taken a house in such a terrace, the rest of the houses were immediately at a premium, particularly those on each side of his lordship. In fact builders find it an excellent speculation to give a good house cheap to a tenant with a title, and are thankful even for such small mercies as a knight's widow.

Our imaginary doctor will find his time much taken up in prescribing for the servants who sleep on the ground-floor of these new houses, and consequently take rheumatism, and for the babies who sleep next the slates and suffer constantly from bronchitis.

Everybody in the families he attends will have at least one severe cold on taking possession, but the *pièce de résistance* will be neuralgia. It is sure to be prevalent in a new district, and has the merit of being very persistent and difficult of cure. The Shakers who bivouacked under hedges covered with snow suffered less from illness than did the inhabitants of some of the streets in our southern suburbs, where the cold cannot be kept out in winter nor the heat in summer, and where the walls are reeking with damp at every change of temperature. Bricks will hold about their own weight of water, and after having been thoroughly soaked they take a long time to become perfectly dry. As nine-inch walls are only the thickness of the length of one brick, they are necessarily not thick enough to prevent the rain which beats on the outside from soaking through to the inside. They can never be built so as to be really rain-proof, and every change in the weather can always be distinctly felt in the rooms.

When driving through some of the suburban districts where monotonous terraces and melancholy cabbage plantations have taken the place of green fields and pleasant hedgerows, one cannot fail to be struck with the deplorable manner in which the houses are being built; nor is it possible to help feeling sorry for the unfortunate people destined to inhabit them. It is far from pleasant to watch the different stages, from the dirty puddle in which the foundation walls are built to the ugly parapet which serves to conceal the bad slating. If the soil should happen to be clay, but not sufficiently good for bricks, it is left as it is, and sometimes only very imperfectly drained. If it should turn out to be sand, then it is sure to be carted away and sold as long as it can be dug up with profit. The holes will be filled with any kind of rubbish at hand, and a foundation laid of broken

bricks and loose stones much more unstable than the sand that was removed ; so unstable that sometimes when the walls settle you can put your finger in the cracks. The open space at the back which is called a garden, apparently because it is so constituted that nothing could possibly grow in it, is often filled up with all sorts of dirt, such as road sweepings, and finished off by a top-dressing of broken bricks, old mortar, shoes and boots, and a few kittens and puppies of tender age and repulsive appearance. The combination is not a savoury one, nor is the place an inviting playground for the children of the family. As to the management of the drains and the kind of traps usually supplied, the position of waste-pipes and water-cisterns, the bad plumber-work and defective sinks, enough has already been written to prove how badly these things are managed even in the finest and most expensively built mansions, and to show how callous people are about sanitary arrangements, until illness calls their attention to some defect which should never have been allowed to exist. A mere glance at the walls will show that they are often built without a damp-proof course, that the partition walls are under the legal thickness, that the chimneys are too narrow, and the mortar either good and scantily used, or bad and laid on with too much profusion. It would be unfair to lay on the builders alone all the blame of running up such houses as those blown down in Kensington. We know that whenever there is a sufficient demand for any article there will be a corresponding supply to meet it. People with small incomes insist upon having cheap houses in imitation of a style which can only be produced in good materials at a considerable cost. They have their reward, and can rejoice in a tawdry balcony and stucco pilasters at the expense of smoky chimneys and bedrooms without shutters. Work-

men's wages and building materials cost so much that the commonest houses are expensive to build in a wholesome and creditable manner,—yet people who know this look calmly on at cities of destruction rising before their eyes, and say nothing can be done to better matters. Perhaps they are right; but there is as much need that the Building Act should be enforced, or made stricter if necessary, as that grocers should be prevented from selling poisonous tea or red-lead in cayenne pepper. The Building Act is so often evaded, particularly in the matter of the thickness of partition walls, that one is led to suspect that the district surveyors are too much overworked and have not time to attend to their business. It is surely not possible that to be a little blind to the faults of builders pays them better and makes their situation a more comfortable one than if they were doing their duty?

When an inexperienced young couple who have hitherto lived in the country take a semi-detached villa in one of our new suburbs, they probably enter in November. Everything delights them at first; the walls are clean, the shutters are freshly painted in delicate colours, the ceilings gleam with whiteness. They have the carpets laid, arrange their furniture to the best advantage, hang the pictures, and set out the blue china. The nursery chimney smokes so that it is uninhabitable, but the agent says it is the particular wind that is blowing. The young wife who is taking lessons in cooking tries to feel a kindly interest in what her next-door neighbour is having for dinner, as it is impossible not to know. She pities the dear teething baby whose shrieks keep her awake half the night, and she wonders what sort of little boys they are who are so distinctly heard dashing up and down stairs. She is delighted with her new house, it has so many cupboards and pegs

for hanging things. Her husband meantime is making plans as to how he will manage the plants in the conservatory so as always to have flowers in bloom. This bliss does not last long. First, the whole family are nearly at death's door with influenza, and the baby takes whooping cough. No change of wind has come to prevent the nursery chimney from smoking, and the flue in the drawing-room is so small that three days of good fires choke it with soot. When one is too ill to eat anything, it is objectionable to smell curry from next door. The young wife's pity for the baby has subsided into a wish that it could find peace in another sphere of existence, and the wicked desire that the elder children may at least sprain their ankles and be obliged to go downstairs quietly almost rises to her lips. The cook complains of a smell in the scullery, and, after having tried with little success all the bad-scented compounds called disinfectants, new traps have to be got, and the drain-pipes are found unconnected with the public sewers. Another and quite different smell haunts the dining-room, and after the young couple and their friends have sniffed and discussed its peculiarities for weeks, and the house-agent, the builder, and the carpenter have all declared they cannot smell anything, it is discovered that the gas-pipes leak, and that there is a constant escape of gas. The boards must be taken up, mysterious men come and go, dinner has to be served in the study, which is soon found to be in a similar condition to the dining-room, and has to go through the same operations. A pleasant seasonable frost now sets in, but alas! the plaster begins to crack on the fine pilasters which support the roof of the porch, and a corner is knocked off one of the steps where there is a flaw in the stone. The excitement produced by a thaw in some of the lately built districts of London is very amusing to ill-natured people who are not the frogs of the occasion.

Maid-servants hurry to and fro, their caps escaping from the precarious pin which holds them under less exciting circumstances, their aprons floating behind, their feet in carpet-slippers. They cry "Water, water!" as though it were the opposite element against whose ravages they were seeking relief. The pipes have of course burst. They are probably very thin, and the walls are no protection against either frost or sun. In the afternoon the ladies of the district pay visits of condolence to each other, and detail the havoc which has been wrought in their dwellings. One lady describes her drawing-room ceiling as in a state of pulp, and her new Brussels carpet as completely spoilt. Another says that the paper on her staircase is hanging in festoons, and that she was awakened in the morning by her little boy telling with great glee that there was a real waterfall going downstairs, and that he had been floating bits of paper on it. A third describes her anguish at finding a beautiful picture which her husband had bought at the Dudley reduced to the state beloved by Turner's disciples, in which it did not matter whether it was hung upside down or not, all form having wholly disappeared from its soaked surface. The cry is now for plumbers, but the supply cannot of course equal the simultaneous demand for them; so all sorts of odd men, the men who are called with such fine irony "handy" because they cannot do anything well, are turned on. The pipes are cobbled up somehow, the builder's charges are regulated by the intensity of the panic, and represent the wages of the most experienced London workmen. Plumbers, like fishermen, make their hay by the aid of water rather than sunshine. After the temporary patching up of the water-pipes comes the invariable procession of paperhangers, whitewashers, and painters, to make work for others in their turn,

and be blessed by the ever-ready charwoman who benefits by them all.

When summer comes our young couple find what sort of wood has been used in their house. It is unseasoned and badly joined. If the hall-door faces south the postman is soon able to put the letters through the cracks in the panels, or to slip the newspapers under or over the door, whichever he prefers. The children lose their money in the crevices of the stairs, and missing teaspoons are found in the gashes which open in the pantry slabs. There is always at least one door in a state of insubordination, and the bolts and their holes refuse to have anything to do with each other. If there are any shutters they cannot be fastened, for they do not meet, and the carpets are cut through as if with a knife, owing to the distance between the gaping boards of the floors. The cupboards let in the dust and smell of return smoke because the flues are not properly plastered, and the rooms are so full of draughts round the surbase that it is impossible to do without fur footstools. The slates will soon begin to blow off, for they are probably put on with galvanized iron nails, on which the atmosphere of London tells with fatal effect; and when our young couple have paid for all the repairs which will be absolutely necessary in the first year, they will, if they survive, find that they might as well have given fifty pounds a year more for a better house and saved their time and temper.

## DOING-UP ONE'S HOUSE.

The mere sight of the words "Builder and Decorator" is sometimes enough to arouse in a person of really sweet temper those angry passions which Dr. Watts only permits to bears and lions. They seem at first



sight harmless words, but the experienced householder knows their full import. He knows that under them lurks the terrible phalanx of plumbers, slaters, gas-fitters, bellhangers, blacksmiths, paper-hangers, white-washers, and plasterers, at whose approach we all fly, and at whose bills many of us quake. The overhoused young doctor who has a strict painting clause in his lease and yet can see a paint-brush without a shudder must be the most insensible of men. He must be without recollection of the things which he has suffered; without that dread of the future which his past experiences ought to supply. Many a lady of refined taste but scanty means sits day after day in a room where the pattern of the paper offends her eye, and the shabbiness of the woodwork is a constant source of annoyance to her. Five shillings would buy all the paint needed to freshen up the doors and shutters; five times five shillings would not pay a London workman for putting it on. Pretty wall-papers can certainly be bought for fabulously small sums, but the expense of having them hung more than doubles their cost. This is much to be regretted, and there seems at present no way out of the difficulty, unless Mrs. Crawshay would organize a band of lady painters. Miss Faithfull might also persuade some of the women who earn two shillings a day by laboriously working a sewing-machine for ten hours, to take to the not more unhealthy occupation of common house-painting. It is surprising that some enterprising emigration agent has not brought over a band of Chinese coolies, or persuaded a few Japanese designers to brighten our walls with their gay chrysanthemums and graceful storks. In Japan the paint-pot seems as constantly in use as the scrubbing-brush is in Holland, and quite as necessary to the comfort of the inhabitants as soap and water is to us. Besides the expense of painting and papering there is the trouble of it. It



is most difficult, either in town or country, to get a small job executed in a reasonable time. Perhaps three days would be quite sufficient to give for the work to be done, say the papering of a room. Messrs. Copal and Oak promise to send their men early on Monday morning. Everything is cleared out on the previous Saturday. The men do not appear till Friday. They spend the day in making a mess and whistling. At twelve o'clock on Saturday they disappear, to be seen no more until the following Wednesday at noon. Meantime the stair carpets must remain up, and a board be left along the hall, over which our friends and our servants have the privilege of tumbling as many times a day as they think expedient. We are not of course now speaking of the rich people who can at any time leave their houses, and can afford to put them into the hands of an experienced and well-known firm; who can give *carte blanche* with regard to the spending of money, and do not interfere with such details as carpets, curtains, or furniture. They, too, have their troubles, into which we need not here enter, but they are not the troubles connected with careless workmen who scamp their work. The foreman in such establishments is the sufferer and the person held responsible. Unhappily there are people in the world who like to have their houses nice, yet who cannot afford to spend much money upon them. When making additions or alterations they are therefore obliged to endure the smell of paint, and must remain at home to superintend second-rate workmen and see their fancies carried out.

But the principal reason why so many people dread having their houses done up is that the object of each tradesman employed seems to be to make work for some other tradesman. The whitewasher forgets to cover up the steel grate in the drawing-room when

he is doing the ceiling. The housemaid is so busy flirting with him and listening to the words of the last comic song which he is trying to teach her that she neglects to remove the fender and fire-irons. Grate, fender, and fire-irons are completely spoilt, and have to be sent away and repolished at considerable expense. The whitewasher also manages to clog the bell-wires so that the bells will not ring. The bell-hanger must therefore be sent for. He leaves dirty finger-marks upon the cornice where he has loosened the cranks, and round the china-handles where he tries the bells. Perhaps he breaks one of the handles. It cannot be matched, so two new ones must be bought, and another tradesman brought in to put them on. The paperhanger possibly uses bad size on the wall, and makes his paste of damaged flour, consequently when the room is again inhabited it has a mysterious but most offensive smell. Perhaps he does not take the trouble to remove the old paper before putting on the new one, in which case pastiles may be burnt and windows opened, but all in vain—the smell will remain. The painter does not sufficiently rub down or burn off the old paint before he puts on the new. He sometimes even covers the old doors with size to save himself trouble and make a surface. He is almost always careless with his first coat—a carelessness he cannot afterwards repair. It is not uncommon, as soon as the new paint is quite dry, and has been under the influence of either sunshine or a hot fire, to see it starting off in pieces at the slightest touch, and leaving the light under-colour visible. If not carefully watched, the painter will put his pots on one of our best tables, making on it a fine confused pattern of circles, great and small. In consequence of his carelessness the French-polisher has to be called in. The painter is quite satisfied, having done his part towards the encouragement of trade. In

giving the hall-door a fresh coat he lets drops fall on the step which no French-polisher or English housemaid could, with any quantity of fuller's-earth, whiten or remove. He walks up and down the oilcloth in the hall with nailed boots, and gives it the appearance of having recently recovered from a severe attack of smallpox. His sympathies are with the makers of oilcloth, not the buyers thereof, so he is rather pleased. It is not uncommon for a bill to be sent in charging for four coats of paint when only two have been put on; perhaps in some cases there may have been three thin paintings and a little chalk mixed with the white lead. Common oak varnish will be charged as best copal, and the bad cotton rope with which the window sashes are mended as best hemp line.

Strange to say, there are people who honestly love the house-painter and his paint, who like to be constantly "restoring" their rooms, who would scarcely take a present of a set of decorative panel pictures from Mr. Leighton, or find place for hangings of "cloth of Arras." A great art collector who has lately remodelled his house paid as much for having some doors done in imitation of mahogany as would have procured the doors in the real wood, whilst another gentleman had his splendid century-old mahogany woodwork painted white. The excuse for this last piece of barbarism we have never discovered; perhaps he was a Queen-Anne-ist, and they looked too ruddily comfortable to match his furniture. Fortunately he did not replace the egg and dart mouldings in the shutters by stop chamfers, which we saw done on another occasion. Men of supposed taste still have their hall-doors grained in a bad imitation of oak or maple, and would scarcely care for natural wood even if it were to be had easily. The reason why builders so love paint and varnish is that it hides bad wood, and ensures to them and their successors work

for ever. If some substitute for whitewash in ceilings could be found which would wash, they would lose thousands a year. They set their faces against the varnished papers which some people have adopted, and which are certainly a help to cleanliness at small cost, because they bear cleaning. They detest marquetry floors with rugs, as there are not then heavy carpets to take up and nail down, and tear the corners out, as we know to our cost.

The stupidity of apparently intelligent workmen is sometimes very puzzling. You arrange on leaving home for the painting and papering of your dining and drawing rooms. When you return, the papers are transposed, but not the paints, so you have a thick flock in the drawing-room with French grey and gold mouldings, while in the dining-room you find a white and gold paper with dark brown and black doors. You left some Japanese crape pictures for a frieze, and find most of them either upside down or sideways. In one a Chinese lady is standing on her head supported by a fan, which she holds in her hand. In another a bird which ought to be skimming the air, is lying on its back apparently in its death agonies. In a third the snow is rising instead of falling. You draw a number to be put on the hall-door; the piece of paper on which you draw it happens not to be straight. The number is put on according to the paper, and suggests that a visit was paid to the "Harp and Crown" round the corner before it was sketched.

It is amusing to see some poor lady bitten with a love of peacock blues, trying to make a country workman unaccustomed to such eccentricities mix the proper colours with which she wishes her rooms redecorated. It is heartrending to see the fearful pigments he produces from her descriptions, and the poor lady's helpless despair. For this sort of stupidity

Trade-Unions are to blame. They give no encouragement to individual talent. They put no premium upon industry and rapid work. A man who belongs to a Trade-Union is like a soldier; his pace must be regulated by that of the weakest man in the regiment. He earns no more wages by being able to do his work in half the time and twice as well as the man beside him. He is not allowed to remain a quarter of an hour after twelve on Saturday when he could in that quarter of an hour finish a most important job. Perhaps some invalid is waiting for a room to be completed; perhaps some real damage will be done by the delay; but the workman must sacrifice himself, his talents, and his desire to be obliging, to the inexorable law of his Trade-Union. The noble working man learns to lounge to his work as if he were going to his club in Pall Mall. He employs a considerable part of his time in looking out of the window at the expense of the British householder. He can bet on the Derby and drink like a lord. Now that Trade-Unions have been accepted as necessary organizations, it is a pity that all trades should not be divided into guilds as of old. The men would then have an inducement to improve themselves by study, and some reward to look forward to from special industry or cultivated intelligence.

## THE SPARE ROOM.

A young couple setting up house in the country, however small may be their income, and however limited the number of their servants, never dream of denying themselves the convenience of a spare room. The expense of receiving an occasional visitor is trifling; the ordinary domestic arrangements are scarcely disturbed; it is a treat to see a fresh face at the dinner-table, and pleasant to have

a chat with some one outside the small circle of home and its neighbourhood. Time is sometimes rather a drug, particularly in the evening; so the hours spent in lounging about the garden in the moonlight are not regretted. The lady of the house has probably a basket-carriage in which she can take her friends short excursions through the cool green lanes. The few pleasures within reach are not costly; there are no new books which must be read and returned to Mudie. Having tea out of doors is often sufficient excitement for a whole afternoon, and black-berry-gathering for another. Wet mornings are spent in looking out suitable extracts for the penny readings, or in knitting comforters for the old men in the village. The hostess feels herself quite under an obligation to the visitors who bring a little change into her quiet home. She knows it is only affection which induces them to come and stay with her. But in London the case is widely different. To busy people of moderate wealth the acknowledged possession of a spare room represents an income-tax of several shillings in the pound. It means to be forced to take in lodgers all the year round who do not pay, but who expect as much attention as if they were in an American hotel—to be obliged, not only to supply them with free quarters, but to amuse, advise, chaperon, perhaps even nurse and bury them.

When one of the squire's many daughters marries cousin in the Bluetape Office, and they establish themselves in a tolerably comfortable, if single-brick, house at Kensington, they agree that their income does not allow much margin for hospitality. It would be unwise to start a guest-chamber, which in all probability would never be empty. In consequence of this sensible decision, the servants are comfortably established in separate rooms, none of them in the region of the cellars or black-beetles. The master of



the house has a roomy, well-appointed dressing-room, a cosy study, and even a den in which he may make a mess with shavings or collodion. The lady of the house rejoices in a little corner-cupboard where she can puzzle undisturbed over the weekly bills, and write home letters descriptive of her happiness and her husband's extraordinary popularity amongst his new relations. The servants she represents as perfect treasures; but as the cook has had no opportunity of displaying her ignorance, because the young couple have dined out nearly every day, and as the housemaid has had an unlimited number of evenings to devote to her young man, this is not so very surprising. That such a state of things should go on for ever is perhaps scarcely desirable, but there is little chance of it, for one afternoon the bride's brother arrives unexpectedly from Calcutta, Accustomed, like all Anglo-Indians, to give and receive unbounded hospitality, he never dreams of going to an hotel, but, collecting his innumerable traps, and a perfect menagerie of birds and beasts, drives at once to his sister's house. She is at a concert, but he stacks his portmanteaus in the hall, takes the monkeys to the kitchen, and hides himself in the drawing-room to surprise his sister when she returns home. The young wife screams as some one, not her husband, darts out from behind the portière and clasps her in his arms, and then half cries with delight to see the youngster who used to be the plague of her life grown into a handsome bearded man. Of course he is quite right to be sure that she can take him in; the fatted calf is immediately killed; the cook improvises for dinner an extra dish which she fondly believes to be a Madras curry, the table-maid gives an additional polish to the spoons, and a bottle of champagne makes its appearance from the cellar. Some sort of shakedown is arranged in the dressing-room, probably composed of

a small iron bed, with an arm-chair at the foot to lengthen it, for six feet three does not repose comfortably on a six-feet stretcher. The owner of the elaborately arranged dressing-room good-naturedly rigs himself up a temporary establishment in the greenhouse, knocks in a nail on which to hang his wife's hand-glass, and is content to use the watering-pot for his chamber-jug. There is some little difficulty about tubbing; but it is easy to solve such difficulties amongst relations, and the brothers-in-law become all the sooner intimate from being obliged to be companions of the bath. Of course slippers, studs, clothes-brushes, button-hooks, collars, and neckties are all hopelessly mislaid; but at last a very happy trio sit down together at the breakfast-table. The only misfortune of the day is that the young husband misses his train, and arrives too late at his office.

The reason why so many people living in London avoid having a spare room is not because they do not wish to take in a friend, but because they find it impossible to protect themselves from acquaintances they dislike. And this is the case with our young couple. The thin edge of the wedge once introduced, their house is turned by a little audacity into a cheap and pleasant hotel. Soon comes a letter, full of the most lively affection, from an aunt by no means beloved in the family. She is delighted to hear what a charming *bijou* of a house her dear niece has got, and is longing to have the delight of watching how she does the honours of her own table. Besides, she is dying to become better acquainted with a nephew of whom she everywhere hears the most flattering descriptions. Could her dear niece find any little corner for her, no matter where, in the garret, on a sofa, or a mattress on the floor? The poor innocent young couple have not strength of mind to risk a quarrel by saying "No," and they cannot plead not having a corner



after taking their brother in ; so they tender an unwilling hospitality, with what grace they can muster, and prepare to make the best of circumstances. Again the dressing-room has to be turned upside down, and the boots, brushes, and razors removed, this time to a comfortless closet under the stairs, in which it is impossible to turn round. The victim has not now the consolation of giving up his comforts for the sake of a fellow who is at least good company, and with whom he can have a comfortable smoke after dinner. Then, too, it is almost impossible to give an elderly lady of vast proportions a small emigrant bedstead, on which to lay her portly form ; so a more imposing structure of brass has to be purchased, as well as a hanging wardrobe in which to stow away the new dresses which she has come to town to buy. The result is that a very considerable cheque has to be drawn, and that the dressing-room is promoted to the dignity of a guest-chamber. The aunt arrives ; there is much display of enthusiastic affection amidst the pile of boxes and other litter that block the narrow hall, the passage, and the stairs, whilst in the background looms helpless and unprovided for an unexpected addition in the shape of a French maid. But, unabashed, the self-invited visitor explains that she has brought Frisette with her, and hopes her dear niece does not mind, and that if there is no cupboard in which she can be put, they will now go out and look for a room in the neighbourhood. She found that she really had so much to do, and was so easily knocked up when without proper attendance, that Frisette in the long run would save trouble ; besides, it was necessary to let her see the fashions at least once a year.

By and by the husband returns. For the first time he does so almost reluctantly, and no wonder, for the evening drags along wearily in convulsive attempts at conversation. The host and hostess, obliged to lay

aside their usual occupations, and not even able to talk freely to each other, are compelled to listen with an appearance of interest to tiresome details of all the commissions which have to be executed, and to the anticipated horrors of the dentist's back parlour. Meantime, Frisette has been giving herself airs down stairs and teaching the servants to be above their places and discontented with their food. She has observed divers shortcomings of management, and picked up numberless pieces of gossip, which will be duly retailed and exaggerated to her mistress, who will thus be prepared to give hints and good advice to her puzzled and distracted hostess. Eventually the day arrives on which it has been arranged that the unwelcome visitors are to take their departure. The master of the house, with natural politeness, says as many civil things as he can possibly force his tongue to utter, as he bids good-bye after breakfast. All through the day's work visions of the quiet happy evening awaiting him pass before his eyes. He indulges in a hansom to reach home half-an-hour sooner, and then finds that the conventional regrets he expressed in the morning with so much difficulty have been taken advantage of, and that his house still remains in the hands of the enemy, who has caught a violent cold in her head.

After several ineffectual struggles against their fate, the young couple are finally obliged to succumb, and to allow their spare room to become as much public property as if it were in the Great Western Hotel. The old clergyman from Stoneshire comes to look for a curate, and numerous seedily-dressed men of the most repulsive appearance occupy the drawing-room during the afternoons. An elderly, hungry-looking Irishman arrives at luncheon-time, and it is impossible for the kind-hearted young hostess with her country ideas, not to ask him to share it. It seems to her that no reason-

able being wants a curacy, and that the old vicar will have to stay for ever looking for one. Happily, he is recalled because no one can be found to take his Sunday duty, and he is replaced by a lady in search of a governess. Before inviting herself, she had put in an advertisement to clinch matters, and prevent the possibility of being refused. The hall-door bell now rings all day long, and the servants are fully occupied in showing candidates up stairs and out again. Letters have to be posted at every hour of the day and night, and that in the district office, as country people have a prejudice against pillar-boxes, and fancy the contents are never delivered. The parlourmaid falls ill, and the housemaid gives warning; the cook, who is dishonest and incompetent, remains. Now comes a letter from two pretty lively girls, saying that, if their dear cousin would only take them in for a few weeks, they would have "such fun," and would promise not to give one bit of trouble, as their aunt will chaperon them everywhere. All they want is bed and breakfast like a City clerk; but bed means returning at three o'clock every morning, and breakfast means a separate meal at half-past ten, which the lady of the house has to see after herself, otherwise the day's work would never be got through by the servants. One of the girls becomes engaged, and her mother sends the hostess a hamper of cabbages as backsheesh. Without any warning two schoolboys next arrive; scarlatina has broken out at the college, and their baby brother at home is in measles. Naturally they are not in the least afflicted, and prepare to enjoy themselves thoroughly. One or two bolstering matches leave more feathers in the corners of the room than in the pillows, but the best part, the down, flies out of the windows. The carved ivory paper-knives make capital shoeing-horns, and do not last too long; the best use to make of ink is to spill it, and it is quite

necessary to have a couple of squirts to amuse themselves with in the morning while waiting for breakfast. If the schoolboys are mischievous, the helpless widow who comes up on business is almost more intolerable. She asks advice upon every subject under the sun, from how to invest her money down to the proper kind of boot-laces to get for Harry. She never has the correct address of any person she wishes to go and see, or of any shop at which she wants to make purchases, nor can she ever master the difference between Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus, or between King's Cross and Charing Cross. She sends in countless parcels "to be paid on delivery," but invariably forgets to leave the money for them. Every cabman she hires receives an umbrella in addition to his fare; and many a fruitless inquiry has to be made at Scotland Yard.

When the season is over the young couple awake to the startling fact that, owing to some mysterious dispensation of Providence, not one of their particular friends has slept a night in the house. The guest-chamber, always full, has been entirely occupied by people for whom they do not care in the least, and whom they never would have dreamed of asking. Indeed, now they think of it, they are not conscious of having invited a single creature. The girl, whose never-absent lover bored them to death, was certainly not asked, nor yet the old lady who put tracts in their boots, and insisted on evening prayers. The Spiritualist, who took unto himself seven other spirits, and who broke the leg of their best oak-table, was self-invited; so was the lady who kept her room for a week while a new set of teeth was being prepared for her, and then for another week trying some cosmetic, which turned out disastrously, and prevented her appearance to the outer world. The little bride saw too much of her, as she was compelled to read aloud by the firelight for her entertainment.

What a blessing it is to be able at last to shut up house and go away for a run, and to have found an honest charwoman to take charge of everything ! But there is no peace even yet for the doomed spare room. The young lady whose visit in the spring turned out such a signal success is now going to be married, and writes to say she is sure her dear cousin will allow her to bring mamma up to order the trousseau. They do not in the least mind that there are no servants, or that the kitchen is being white-washed. They will bring their own maid and man, who can do everything. The unhappy possessors of this popular house groan in spirit, but they are as helpless against an experienced woman of the world as they were against the girl who came to get music lessons and made life unendurable with the exercises she sang all day long out of tune. But perhaps their troubles have one good effect. The husband absolutely welcomes with effusion the mother-in-law, the monthly nurse, and the baby, who effectually put an end to the existence of the spare room.

## LIVING ON FLATS.

Some time ago a lady endeavoured to convince her friends and the public that if they would avail themselves of the machinery which she proposed in her scheme of Co-operative Housekeeping, all domestic troubles would vanish like dew under the rays of a summer sun. The scarcity of good cooks would no longer signify, for one experienced *chef* would be able to cook for as many families as now inhabit a whole street. In this idea she followed Robert Owen, who used to talk about co-operation extinguishing kitchen fires. Housemaids would cease to be plagues, for they would have the same

freedom that is now enjoyed by shop-girls. They would work a certain number of hours in the twenty-four, and have regular duties to perform, but when these were fulfilled their time would be at their own disposal. They might learn French and drawing, spend their evenings in theatres, or walk in the Park with their young men. There would be no mistress to interfere when the work was done. They would be in the same position as young women in the Post Office, or in any of the other employments now sought after by those who used to enter domestic service. It was hoped that, by conceding a certain amount of liberty, a better class of girls might be procured, and that contented and industrious servants would again come into the market. Then, too, in co-operative households it would be impossible for the nurses to frighten the children into fits, or to put on the babies' clothes with pins. Co-operative nurseries would be under enlightened supervision, and there might be a Kindergarten on the premises. Girls could be educated in classes without being sent to school, and have good instruction at a moderate cost. But although there is apparently something to be said in favour of such a scheme, and although many people gave an intellectual assent to the desirableness of giving the plan a fair trial, it did not commend itself to any large number of the British public. The movement consequently resulted in little but talk and a few bad jokes. Co-operative households on a large scale still remain untried. The experiment has only been made on paper and in the imaginations of unhappy house-keepers driven wild by bad servants.

It is, however, shortly to be attempted on a small scale, and it will be interesting to know the results after a year or two. Over the curious-looking Gothic arch with a keystone at Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, the house is now (1875) in course of construction.



It is hoped that it will be ready to be inhabited at Christmas, but it narrowly escaped being burnt a few days ago when the fine mansion in the courtyard was destroyed. The outside of the building is not particularly attractive. It looks like a spinning mill, and from its extreme height has an unpleasant appearance of instability. On the ground-floor is a common dining-room, with another for private dinner-parties, also the kitchen, housekeeper's-room, pantries, and all necessary domestic offices. Above this are several stories, consisting of moderate-sized suites of rooms conveniently arranged. They do not contain anything but sleeping and reception rooms, because the inhabitants are supposed to dine down stairs, and, as there is a capital lift, there can be no difficulty in so doing, except in cases of illness. The three top flats are delightful on a fine day. Those who inhabit them will have a magnificent and ever-changing view when the Westminster fogs will allow them to see anything at all. There are no high buildings to shut out St. James's and the Green Park, with the row of palaces at the top; and away over acres of chimney-pots lie the hills of Hampstead and Highgate, looking blue and distant through the haze. On the south side is to be seen the Crystal Palace glittering with every ray of sunshine however feeble, and Norwood Hill still dotted with fine old timber. Beneath lie the Abbey and the new Aquarium, and a view of every tower and steeple from St. Paul's to Notting Hill. At the top of the house is a room of double height, designed to contain the organ, which was most unfortunately burnt the other day, and which was, we believe, a splendid instrument. It is proposed that the management of everything shall be in the hands of a committee chosen from the residents, and that they shall be their own caterers, and manage everything in the way adopted at some of the most successful clubs. It is

an experiment in which many people are interested, and in the present case it may possibly succeed, owing to the comparatively favourable conditions under which it is started. It is hardly necessary, however, to say that there are many things against it. English people are not naturally sociable. They have not learnt how to live in public. Whether they will be obliged to do so from the scarcity of servants which has fallen on the land remains to be seen; but it would be no harm if they would in the meantime cultivate the kind of courtesy which would make it possible. Even our ideas of family life are at present very circumscribed, and would have to be enlarged before we tried living in groups. We like a family to mean a man and his wife, their children, and servants. Three generations could not get on comfortably together in this country as they can in France. It is not impossible to find living happily, now at their château in Normandy, now at their house in Paris, M. le Marquis de Grandchose and Mme. his wife, M. le Comte de Grandchose and Mme. his wife, and M. le Vicomte and Mme. his wife. It is quite common to see two sons and their respective wives and children living in peace under the same roof. In France family life in its larger sense seems to thrive, but in England such households as one often meets with there would be quite out of the question. The author of the *Heir of Redclyffe* brings together in the same home such a family as one constantly meets with abroad, but she does not attempt to make "the Three Brides" agree either with their mother-in-law or with each other. She knows too well how unnatural it would be. The result of this distaste which we all have to living in patriarchal families is that in England there is a great deal of waste of house-room amongst the middle classes, who are always complaining of the high rents they have to pay. There is also waste of a certain



sort of power which might be advantageously used in its proper place. An unmarried aunt often goes out as a governess when she might as well teach her own nieces. The grandmother lives all alone and visits orphan asylums and convalescent children's homes, when she might as well help to nurse her little grandson in the measles, and have the pleasure of seeing the baby's first attempt to crawl across the floor. There is, however, no use in discussing the matter. We all hate our relations except at a distance, and our habits and manners would have to be radically changed before we could imitate our Continental neighbours. Every one quarrels with his mother-in-law, and money transactions between relatives are proverbially unfortunate. We too often reserve any little politeness we can boast for strangers, and do not air it in the home circle. Then, too, our climate is fatal to large communities; we have to live so much indoors, and see so much more of each other than we should if the weather were suitable to being a great deal in the open air. Altogether, it does not appear that we are yet ready for co-operative homes.

There is, however, one Continental custom which, one would think, might have been more largely adopted in this country—that of living on flats. No doubt there are in Edinburgh whole streets given up to them, but they are getting to be inhabited, especially of late years, either by unmarried men or by people who cannot afford what is called a self-contained house. In England, houses in flats have never been really popular. It would appear that it makes all the difference to an Englishman whether the party-wall between him and his neighbour be perpendicular or horizontal. He will endure a piano next door, but rebels at one played beneath his feet or over his head. He will cheerfully go up and down any number of stairs within his own house, but he refuses to mount even a single

flight to get to his apartments. In short, no place is either house or home if the roof above and the earth below are not included. Other human creatures must only live to the right hand or to the left; never in a top story or an underground cellar. Perhaps it is the ladies who are the cause of this prejudice, as men exist very contentedly in chambers, and are not miserable in college. Whatever is the reason, the prejudice prevails, or the system would be tried on a scale likely to ensure success. Hitherto, however, we must say, little opportunity has been offered to the public to give the plan a fair trial. No doubt handsome flats are to be had at Westminster, but they are on ground which is only artificially raised above the river, and there are sensible people who prefer a part of the town where the soil is not Thames deposit. Some blocks were built a few years ago off the Marylebone Road for the families of artisans, but they have been eagerly rented by people of a better class than those for whom they were intended. By throwing two of the three-room suites into one a not uncomfortable residence can be made. It then consists of two sitting-rooms, two bed-rooms, a kitchen, scullery, servants' room, and bath, and, when nicely decorated and furnished, is not to be despised by a young couple who have married for love without much of this world's goods. The situation is, however, bad, and the approach not pleasant, owing to the close proximity of a number of stables. Still the flats are much sought after, and, as more are in course of construction, we may assume that, although they have to be much better built than small houses, they have proved a good speculation to the owner.

Some blocks of the same kind, but on a handsome scale, in an open central situation, say near Hyde Park on the north side, where the ground is high and the soil gravel, and where there is not much noise,

would quickly find occupants. Indeed people might be found ready to subscribe money on the building society system, which has been so successful that it is to be wondered that others than the working classes do not start similar societies. No two sets of apartments ought to be exactly alike, and the architect should not be allowed to settle where the windows were to go until he had designed the inside of the rooms. Uniformity ought to be a matter of no account, and it should not be deemed indispensable for a room to have four corners, each a right angle. In order to make the blocks pay at all they must be very high, but this ensures thick walls, one of the most essential things for health and comfort, whether in summer or winter. There would have to be a first-rate lift and a fireproof staircase. No bedroom should be without a service of hot and cold water and a place to boil a kettle when there was no fire in the room. In small suites the dining-room ought to be sacrificed to the sitting-room, a butler's pantry ought to open off it, and that again to communicate with the kitchen, which should simply be a place to cook in, with every convenience within arm's length from the fire or gas stove. The suites ought to range in size from a studio and one small bedroom for the artist, to the number of rooms sufficient to enable a member of Parliament to entertain. But we may safely venture to say that, should there arise a demand for flats, the British architect, with his usual disregard as to who are to live in the places he designs, will make them all exactly alike upon some plan which does not suit any one.

Every one who has lived in a small town house of many stories must often have felt how convenient it would at once become if it could be laid on its side. What a delightful suite one would feel possessed of as he walked from the kitchen through the dining and drawing-rooms, and the best bedroom, into the day-

nursery, and perhaps to an attic beyond. Then an almost equally good one would be made by the back rooms from the servants' hall to the box-room in the roof. A few of these tall houses turned on their sides and piled one on top of the other would simply be the sort of flats we want, and there is no reason why some should not consist of two stories, if required. There ought to be an endless variety, so that people could get what suited their tastes and habits. If "lady helps" are to succeed anywhere, it will be in flats. The work is easier, and need not be nearly so dirty as where there is the usual basement story. A great part of the difficulty of cooking consists in the stupid way in which we arrange our kitchens. More mess is made in an ordinary house in a day than ought to be made in a year if servants were careful. They are always cleaning because they are always unnecessarily dirtying. Apartments on the flat system too, would be a great convenience to people who are much in the habit of going away for a few days at a time, and would be more comfortable, and not more expensive, than lodgings or an hotel, to people who come to town only for the season. To young married couples of small means they would be invaluable. There is no reason why, for those who wish to be boarded as well as lodged, adequate arrangements should not be made; but it would be well that this should be done better than is usually the case. Here co-operation might come in. Without obliging people to dine in a public room, there might be a house dinner at a fixed price. But this is always a difficult thing to manage, and the arrangement is rarely satisfactory.

In building flats in London there are two essential points in which it is desirable that they should differ from those in Paris. There must be in each suite proper sleeping accommodation for the servants. Nothing can be more barbarous than the way in which

French servants are herded together in garrets without ceilings under the slates, where they are broiled into apoplexy in the summer and frozen with intense cold in the winter. The immorality amongst the servants is we believe, scandalous. It could scarcely be otherwise, when we consider that they have a separate staircase, often into the street, and no supervision. The other thing to be avoided is starting such a pernicious system as that of the *concierge*. The Parisians writhe under the yoke, but they are helpless. The *concierge* is complete master of the position. He is a spy, a tyrant, a cheat. He will do nothing without being paid for it—not even give people their letters; and he will do anything if he gets money enough for doing it. Flats might be under police control if necessary, but the inhabitant should not be at the mercy of the hall-porter.

## FURNISHING.

It appears probable that a few years hence we may see a strong reaction of taste in favour of extreme simplicity which will influence both dress and furniture. Materials will naturally be more costly and magnificent, but these qualities will no longer be found in mere trimmings. So many people have been bitten with the present madness for decoration—people, for the most part, who have never paused to think what decoration is—that those who have innate good taste, or who have studied ornament on rational grounds, will presently flee in disgust to whitewashed walls and dimity curtains. Such sensitive spirits deserve sympathy. They have been sorely tried. The man cursed with natural or acquired taste walks through the valley of this world as through a place of torture and humiliation. His best feelings are made

scourges wherewithal to torment him. After preaching for years the mission of art in the regeneration of the uncivilised, he finds all his pet theories turned against him. He may love Japanese screens where any screens are required, but he might be roasted alive in a friend's drawing-room before he could get one for use. The walls are, so to speak, creeping with Japanese screens, but what cares he how Japanese they be if he has no ladder by him to fetch one down? Blue plates are very well adapted to feed from, and may look very well in the china closet. But, hung on wires in formal rows, they become monotonous. When ladies washed up their own china after a "dish of tea," as they replaced it carefully in a corner cupboard or on a miniature dresser, it was quite right that such articles of convenience should be as handsome as the porcelain itself. But when ladies no longer tend their own tea-things, it is ridiculous to see sets of cups and saucers ranged on shelves in the drawing-room with a teapot or two in the middle, none of them ever intended for the unhallowed uses of everyday life. Why should slop-basins be studded over the room as thick as spittoons in a bar-parlour? They are matter in the wrong place. A pat of butter is none the better for a splendid device on its unctuous surface. Perhaps our lumps of coal will soon be sent up to the drawing-room carved and gilt for the burning. One longs to see ornament in its proper place. Candlesticks that hold no candles, flower-vases empty of roses, copper coal-scuttles of antique form on the tops of cabinets, beer-jugs filled only with dust, such are the contents of modern rooms. Greek tombs, Oriental pagodas, and curiosity shops in Holborn are ransacked to furnish our chambers, and while the shelves are covered with old Worcester and the mantelpiece groans under brazen chargers, our tea is served in Staffordshire stoneware set out on a

Birmingham tray. This is turning domestic art upside down and inside out. Though handsomely-bound books form the best ornaments for the library shelf, we seldom think of bestowing, even on what we read, any but the gaudy cloth of the modern publisher. Yet books can be arranged so as to form as harmonious a wainscoting as Indian matting, and are surely a more satisfactory investment than even old oak, while for the purposes of ordinary decoration there is nothing for a moment to be compared with natural flowers. It is in beautifying the things we use that the most lasting satisfaction is to be found, not in buying rows of greybeard jugs or Italian medicine jars.

When a young couple set up house now-a-days they are obliged at least to pretend that they wish to furnish artistically. If they have lived outside the circle of art-culture, and have no notion whether they like Gothic, Queen Anne, or Rococo, they send for all the manuals they see advertised about tables and chairs, houses and housekeeping. They study them most assiduously, and make copious notes. But, strange to say, the more they read the further they are from being able to come to any decision as to the colour of the drawing-room paper, or the pattern of the dining-room curtains. In the multitude of counsellors there is complete confusion, and they wish in their hearts, though they are ashamed to say so, that they might have the good old mahogany with which their fathers and mothers were happy and comfortable. They do not recognise harmony in colour when they see it. A child in an indigo-blue frock holding an orange in its hand gives them no delight; a Greek vase of exquisite proportions has for them no grace. In short, neither by nature nor education have they any taste for art, and they expect to acquire it simply by wishing to be in the fashion. But it is no more possible for a person without natural eye to harmonize



colour properly, or choose furniture of just proportions, than it would be possible for any one without natural ear to compose an opera. However, as fashion has to be studied in dress, why should it not be studied in furniture? There are plenty of people who talk glibly about high art and ceramic trademarks, and are only too ready to give advice. Almost every magazine has its articles on the subject. But with a smattering of knowledge the difficulties become greater than ever, and the poor young people, so ready to do what is required of them, become completely mystified and discouraged.

One manual on this subject, written by a lady who has already explained how other ladies may dress on fifteen pounds a year provided they practise strict economy in the matter of underclothing, looks delightfully practical. There is a list at the end of the various things required in a ten or twelve-room house where two maid-servants and a man are kept. The whole furnishing is to be done for between five and six hundred pounds. Everything seems most complete, and it is perhaps a little hypercritical to remark that two aprons seem a rather small allowance for the butler, and that he must have some difficulty in attending to all the fires with only one coal-scuttle, even though that one be made of copper. Then, too, the cook will be an excellent manager if she can make three bowls serve for beating eggs, mixing sauces, putting by dripping and gravy, storing milk, boiling puddings, and all the other duties for which bowls are required. However, these are small matters compared to the important question as to what is to be the prevailing tint of the room in which the dishes produced in the kitchen are to be eaten. The young couple are advised in small rooms to limit themselves to two colours, for fear the effect should become "messy." Blue is discarded as not being economical



and as difficult to manage, because shades that match in daylight do not look well together at night. But some charming combinations are suggested where more liberty is allowed. For instance, a pale primrose wall, a dull canary-coloured carpet, and cheerful green curtains, are considered suitable for a room with a "medium aspect;" while "blush-rose walls, a warm crimson carpet, and green curtains, containing a dash of pink," will suit a northern exposure. The bedrooms may be painted in oak graining, because it is uncommon for a bedroom, but the paper must be "unvexatious." The smoking apartment is to have a "manly pattern" chintz, and the carpet is to be Turkey if possible, because men are such fidgets. Of course it is quite right to have a "manly pattern" in the smoking-room, for even at the Doublesex Club ladies are not permitted to enter the sacred precincts. Our young couple suppose that this is an example of realistic art, and are thankful for the clear definition of a manly pattern as "something in stripes in which red predominates." Having collected all these useful hints, they turn to an æsthetic-looking volume with a fascinating label in white paper. Here they reach a higher, if not a clearer, atmosphere. There are not such explicit directions, but the sentiments are beautiful. In it they find true principles of art decoration; and yet they are allowed to have their "normal surroundings" in harmony with their individual taste, being only cautioned that a "room should be set in a certain key, and, if allowed to fall out of it for the sake of variety, should speedily return into its normal channel." This, they admit, sounds most subtle. How charming to think of colour being harmonized like a glee, and all the things in the room keeping in tune, no matter how much you move them about! But what is to be done with the splendid scarlet table-cover which has been given them, if the drawing-

room is to be sage green? It will be like a major chord struck by chance in a minor air, and properly strung eyes will thrill with pain at the sight. But, on reading a little further, the young couple receive much comfort, and find it will not be absolutely necessary to put away all their wedding presents in locked drawers. Even the claims of art, it seems, are to be disregarded when they stand in antagonism to the smallest token of esteem and affection; or, as the writer finely puts the delightful sentiment, "The principle which regards the motive of a gift is deeper than that which contemplates with critical nicety the attributes of the thing given." They are to choose a place as "much in the dark as possible" for the piano, which is a cruel blow, as they sing duets together, but they also find that furnishing should be a thing of the heart as well as of the head, which encourages them amazingly. Presently they come to a passage which dispels half their troubles, for they read that young married people should not scour the country seeking for the musty old bureaus of defunct ancestors, but have new furniture, and grow old with it. They now make a dash at a bulky catalogue which has been sent them post free, and which they have hitherto been afraid to look at because the things were all new. It seems, however, to combine in the most wonderful manner the practical, the artistic, the useful, and ornamental. It talks of stencilled walls and tinted ceilings, quotes Pugin, Sir Digby Wyatt, Mr. Ruskin, and Mrs. Warren. It is an immense relief to find some one who will take upon himself the responsibility of providing everything from garret to cellar, to whom the furnishing of a house is a "labour of love" for which he will condescend to take money. So it is arranged that the house is to be done up in all the proper tints, to have dados, wainscotings, and varnished floors.

“Elizabethan easy-chairs with cabriole legs” and an “elegant walnut Louis-Quatorze lady’s cabinet writing-table, handsomely inlaid with marquetric,” are ordered for the drawing-room ; Cromwell chairs and “antique carved oak book-cases” for the library. There are to be “baronial” coal-vases with mediæval mountings, an “Athenian hip-bath,” an “Eastlake” breakfast service, and Minton tiles in all the fire-places.

The young couple get into their house at last ; they give the finishing touches by placing bits of china and odds and ends of embroidery about the room. They pay their bills, the house is hideous, and they never find it out.



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## QUEEN ANNE'S FLOWERS.

PARLIAMENT has met, Rotten Row is filling, Valentine's Day has come and gone, the birds are beginning to sing, but even "the inquiring bee" could scarcely find a flower in Hyde Park. In August, when every one is out of town, and empty chairs are all that remain to remind us of the gay toilets and crush of the season, the beds from the Marble Arch to Stanhope Gate will be in the full blaze of their gay, if not altogether harmonious, colouring. When in November people begin to return, these beds will be mounds of dark empty earth, giving passers-by a shudder as they liken them to uncared-for graves. In his delightful essay "Of Gardens," Bacon says, "I doe hold it, in the Royall Ordering of Gardens, there ought to be Gardens for all the Moneths in the Yeare. In which, severally, Things of Beautie may be then in season." But few modern pleasure-grounds are managed on this sound principle, although with the numberless plants and the rich variety of flowering and berried shrubs now added to our list, it ought to be much easier to arrive at the acme of good gardening than it was two hundred and fifty years ago. In those days gentlefolk were content to live all the year round in a country house. There was no social pressure to force them to spend the sweetest months of spring and early summer in crowded streets and heated ballrooms. A family tour on the Continent was arranged years before, and talked of years after the great event had been accomplished. The lives of those prosaic folk were still endurable to them although they had no shooting-box in the Highlands, no yacht in the Mediterranean. But now the

“princelike” gardens of which Bacon speaks, and which, he says, ought not to be less than thirty acres in extent, have to be managed on totally different principles. The great aim of an intelligent and experienced gardener in these days is to produce his best show in whatever season, be it spring or autumn, the family chance to be at home. This is by no means difficult to accomplish, although one may constantly see fine places where such an obviously necessary plan does not even seem to be attempted.

It would of course be most unreasonable to expect the Board of Works to consider at what time London is full, or during which months it is empty. For all we know to the contrary, the gardening in the Parks may be for the benefit of country tourists. It would be unfair to ask men already overworked to remember that spring is precisely the season of the year when a generous display of even the commonest flowers, provided they were bright in colour, would be acceptable to Her Majesty's subjects. Competitive examinations certainly do not include gardening amongst their subjects, although a useless knowledge of botanical terms is not uncommon amongst young men. But every one must have felt at some time in his life how, with the lengthening of the days, comes a desire to see things growing. It is now that we watch with impatient interest the snow transforming itself into snowdrops, the icicles growing into catkins, the crocuses returning with interest every ray of sunshine, though it be given grudgingly and through tearful clouds. When the East wind blows they shelter themselves in their spiky sheaths, but are ready to open their glowing breasts at the faintest invitation from the West. It is now that we welcome the purple flush of spring on the beeches, the wakening of the daisies, the sprouting of the grass, the bursting of the lilac buds. But in the Parks we must for the present be content with a few

scattered crocuses supplemented by orange peel. We look in vain for the hepaticas which ought to be popping their little pink or blue noses out of the ground, for the single anemones scarlet and purple, with which French and Italian vineyards will shortly be carpeted, for the winter aconite and the hardy crimson primroses. There are no pots of early tulips, no patches of spring heath, no dwarf blue scillas. We do not see any grape hyacinths or dog's-tooth violets appearing. Even if these plants had to be raised in pots it would be at no great expense or trouble. They could be easily removed when out of bloom, and replaced by other things in their season. Then too it would surely not be unreasonable to ask that in the borders that skirt the railings, and amongst the clumps of shrubs, there might be planted plenty of daffodils which "come before the swallow dares," and an abundance of winter violets, snow-drops, and narcissi.

Unfortunately the neglect of spring flowers of which we complain is not confined to the managers of public gardens ; it exists wherever gardeners have their own way. They hate spring flowers because they interfere with the only things gardeners think fit for a gentleman to look at—bedding-out plants. It is odd to see how these foreign plants have now almost ousted the flowers of our grandmothers' days. They appeal to the vulgar love of garish colour, they suit the taste of the people who buy tartan shawls, they are admired by those who do not think their dress perfect without the help of both a good red and a good bright yellow, and plenty of them, but, above all, they have been the fashion for the last ten or fifteen years. It is often amusing to trace a fashion as it percolates downwards. By the time it has reached the far-away sleepy country villages something quite new and entirely opposite is really the rage amongst the upper ten thousand.

Cottagers now try to fill their little plots with geraniums and calceolarias, which they are obliged to keep indoors at great inconvenience to themselves and loss of light to their rooms. Meantime my lady at the Court is hunting the nursery grounds for London Pride and gentianella to make edgings in her wilderness, and for the fair tall rockets, the cabbage roses, and the nodding columbines which her pensioners have discarded and thrown away. The disappointed gardener at the Court sees the border which he had destined for the last new and most hideous pattern of ribbon bordering turned into a lovely plantation of lilies and larkspur, pentstemon and phlox, all allowed to grow at their own sweet will amongst hardy and sweet-scented shrubs. The beds which he had intended to imitate as nearly as possible an oil-cloth pattern, are, to his horror, filled with pearl-powdered auriculas, and daphne cneorum, while "Many a rose carnation feeds with summer spice the humming air," and blue salvias and tree peonies mingle with honeysuckles and poppies. If he has any regard for his reputation amongst his fellows, he will throw up the place, however much his wages may be raised to compensate his feelings for such a state of things.

Thank goodness, the days of ribbon borderings and oil-cloth patterns are numbered. For once fashion has done something to encourage natural beauty and true art. We rejoice heartily, so far as the science of gardening is concerned, at the new turn of the wheel which has given us back those dear old flowers. Queen Anne has come to her own again, and the train of faithful and enthusiastic subjects with whom she has returned bring in their hands proud turncap lilies and stately hollyhocks to plant against a background of moulded brick or melancholy yew. They troop into the panelled rooms of her houses, bearing in their hands creamy white vases filled with lavender and



lupin, which they place on emaciated tables to harmonise with the dove-coloured curtains and the straight lines of the uncomfortable sofas. They plant passion flowers round the porticoes and train the musk roses, despised but yesterday, to mingle with the ghostly juniper, and to blush as the inhabitants look at them through the small-paned windows. We may now hope again to see lovers walking in "Alleys Spacious and Faire, hedged at both ends to keep out the wind." They will stop and look at the "Heapes," "some with Periwinkle, some with Pincks, some with Sweet William red," and they will gather "the like Low flowers, being withal Sweet and Sightly." We shall also, if Piesse and Lubin have not entirely destroyed our natural taste by their artificial productions, take care that there are aromatic herbs in our pleasaunce, because "the Breath of Flowers is farre Sweeter in the Aire (where it comes and goes like the Warbling of Musick) than in the hand." Bacon goes on to remind us of many a fragrant plant, and speaks of "Strawbery leaves dying which yeeld a most excellent Cordial Smell." We know of other strawberry leaves which are also a "cordial" of the most esteemed kind in these latter days. Our grandmothers did not despise a posy of gillyflowers and balm of Gilead, and lovers sent each other "rosemarie for remembrance," which was considered comforting to the brain and strengthening to the memory before Perdita put it into her garlands. The truth is, our grandmothers loved and superintended their gardens; they gave to them that air of individuality and refinement without which no drawing-room, no pleasure-ground, is perfect.

It is almost impossible to say why such gardens as those at the south side of the Crystal Palace, or at Battersea Park, should be so often called "Italian." Italian gardens are simply terraces with the plants suitable to the climate growing in magnificent

profusion ; there may be a few rare kinds in pots sunk in the ground, some vases may stand on each side of the steps ; there may possibly be a large fountain plashing in the centre, but beds cut out of grass and filled with masses of raw colour would in Italy be impossible. Italians would have too much taste to submit to them. These beds must ever be inharmonious, because each plant has its own particular foliage to accord with its flowers, and the green of grass round spots of bright colour takes the place of foliage, and, as it is never the natural colour, must always offend the educated eye. As for the gardens which in our crowded suburbs are supposed to be Italian because they have a small plaster fountain and a little bit of rockwork in the corner, with some vases almost as big as the house, our time would fail to tell of them, and our patience would desert us in the description. For those who are guided merely by fashion, what more can we do than remind them that Lady Corisande in *Lothair* had an old-fashioned garden.

All landscape artists love our native perennial flowers. They accord as well with grey stone as they do with red brick. They do not make spots of crude colour in their foregrounds and are an admirable background for figures. Their lines are graceful and easy ; undistorted by artificial cultivation, their foliage accords with the trees. It seems as though the plants natural to a country were chosen by the scientific eye of nature to harmonise with the general tone of its vegetation and with the ordinary colouring of its skies. With us the grass is bright and the sky often grey ; so the more subdued tints of our natural plants appear most in unison with the pale lights and soft shadows to which we are accustomed. This is why the wild flowers in a wood have a charm all their own ; they are tinted by the master-hand of

nature to suit their beds of moss and their background of lichenised stems of trees. These long-lived flowers for which we are pleading have yet another charm, that of permanence. We have time to become fond of each separate plant, and to know where it grows. It is almost impossible, but, if possible, it is very sad, to become attached to an annual and then to see it decline its head and be "Lastely, safely buried," never more to appear again above the ground. We share Jonah's aversion to the gourd. A row of plants in pots all the same, and constantly being moved to new places, lose their individuality ; they represent a crowd of unknown faces. How much more we love robin redbreast, who braves the winter frost and has a recognised territory of his own, than the birds of passage that people our hedges only when they are green. We like with Hood to remember that the laburnum which we planted in childhood is still living, although we may never see it again ; that the rose leaves of which we made *pot pourri* last summer will be succeeded by other "overblown faint roses," and buds that "disclose not a thorn's breadth more of red for the summers and the winters which have passed us overhead." We like to point out to our children the exact bush beside which our love for history was aroused, as we were shown the mingled colours of Lancaster and York. How pleasant it is after long absence from home to pluck again a piece of jasmine off the very tree from which we sheepishly gathered a spray to put amongst the chestnut curls of our earliest lady-love ; the sadness with which we look at the flowers prized by those gone from amongst us is tempered by the recollection of the pleasure they had in their fragrant blossoms or their rare colour.

## MODERN GARDENS.

A tolerably successful rebellion has been organized by people of educated taste against English upholstery and French fashions. A few courageous persons have actually presumed to furnish and decorate their houses according to their own wayward fancies, instead of on the principles approved by Messrs. Scroll and Gilder. Friends and acquaintances pay them visits in order to criticise and wonder, but, strange to say, are generally so struck with the charm that individuality gives to any room, and so much emboldened by the results of audacity, that they determine on the first opportunity to go and do likewise. Consequently a large demand has lately arisen for artistic wall papers, harmoniously coloured carpets, and picturesque fireplaces. In self-defence the large shops are obliged to try to meet the requirements even of those benighted beings who cannot fall down and worship the last new thing with the reverence usually accorded to it by the British public. It is easy to sneer at the present mania for bric-à-brac, but it is better than gambling and horse-racing. It is a question whether a costermonger who enjoyed having a painted flower on his tea-cup would be likely to kick his wife to death. However, owing to this revolt against ostentatious ugliness, good patterns and delicate combinations of colour may now be seen where formerly the goods exhibited for sale ought to have made an intending purchaser shudder and turn away empty-handed. Architects, too, have been obliged to realise the importance of domestic architecture, and many of the craft are able to build houses which, instead of being an eyesore to passers-by, are pleasant to look upon, and do not quite spoil the effect of a picturesque landscape. The apostles of art in the

household, having now managed to persuade fashion to follow in their train for at least a time, will have leisure to turn their attention elsewhere. It would be well if they could be induced to step outside the well-cared-for dwelling-house and engage in a crusade against the modern gardener, a tyrannical and prosaic creature who holds the same position amongst the flower-pots that the upholsterer does amongst chairs and tables. Our gardens have degenerated for precisely the same reason that our mason-work is commonplace and our woodwork either distorted by objectless turning or painted in imitation of what it is not. Ignorance and want of taste in those who have money to spend must always have a fatal effect upon everything produced. Rich people buy stucco palaces because they have not learnt anything about architecture, and could not appreciate the difference between stone and plaster if they tried. They give orders for costly furniture ; but as they have only a feeble idea of what they want, and scarcely the foggiest notion of what they admire, they leave these knotty points to be solved by some firm in whom a titled acquaintance has recommended them to have complete confidence. They value their house and its contents in exact proportion to what they have been made to pay for them. It is precisely the same with their garden. They know nothing about flowers, and can only judge of the merits of their pleasure-ground by the length of the bills and the number of men they keep employed. It never occurs to them that, just as a drawing-room, however expensively furnished, loses its fascination and air of comfort if left entirely to the care of the housemaid, so no garden can be at all satisfactory without the nameless charm that only can be given by the superintendence of a person of taste and cultivation. Little touches of refinement and subtlety are always required which even the best servants, except

perhaps "lady-helps," can scarcely be expected to supply.

It is to be regretted that a larger proportion of those who live at their country places at least nine months of the year, and have nothing particular to do during those nine months, should not take up the pleasant pursuit of artistic gardening, and give to their own family and their friends the pleasure of seeing nature at its best. Of course we are not now speaking of show places, where a competent director like Sir Joseph Paxton takes complete charge, nor yet of those establishments where there is so large an area under glass that the great object of the unhappy proprietor is to get an experienced man who will be able to sell a sufficient quantity of forced fruit to lessen expenses. There are many imposing gardens of this description where the family finds it almost impossible to have the commonest things in profusion, or even a sufficient crop of currants to make the jelly required at table. Scarcity and ostentation go hand in hand. It would seem, however, that in a small establishment there ought to be some one who looked after the garden. At first sight one might suppose that a young lady would feel as much interest in the roses that grow in the borders as the artificial ones she places in her bonnet. But here certainly a difficulty does arise, owing to the intolerable position which the ignorance of employers has enabled our gardeners to assume—a position analogous to that taken by our cooks. The ordinary modern gardener, whose only knowledge of plants has been acquired by working in a nursery-ground, must appear to a real lover of flowers the most insufferable mixture of conceit and ignorance. He makes no attempt to learn how to keep the pleasure-grounds in beauty all the year round, and the kitchen-garden well stocked with necessary crops. On the contrary, his only ambition is to see his name appear on prize

tickets at neighbouring flower-shows, and to sell in Covent Garden the fruit he cultivates at his master's expense. To gratify these noble aspirations he does not scruple to appropriate the hours which legally belong to his employers, nor will he hesitate to sacrifice all the flowers of a plant which should be covered with blossoms in order to perfect a single bloom for exhibition. He runs up long bills with his former master or at a neighbouring nursery-ground, and orders seeds from a London house which he has not always a definite intention of sowing, as well as bulbs which perhaps never appear except in the accounts. He tries to enforce the law that none of the family are to cut the flowers or touch the fruit ; but if the lady's-maid happens to be pretty, she will find no difficulty in appropriating the earliest peach and the most cherished tea-rose. He cannot, however, bear to see anything given away by his master, and would rather let the plums spoil on the trees than pack them in a hamper to be sent as a present. It is impossible to induce him to sow a sufficient succession of crops of peas, spinach, and lettuce, so that, if some sowings fail, there will still be an abundant supply throughout the season. He prefers to spend all his energies on producing a few sticks of celery earlier than any one else, and a monster gourd which no one can use. It is rare to see a garden that is under the complete control of an ordinary gardener in which the supply of small fruit admits of the proprietor giving away generously to his poorer neighbours ; yet no modern gardener would refuse to force pots of strawberries, so that he might send in a dozen tasteless specimens for a dinner-party. Amongst the flower-beds he is simply unendurable, as his theory of gardening consists in arranging everything in rows or patches, and on no account allowing any plant under his charge to display the cloven foot of natural habit. To him



even a creeper growing at its own sweet will is an eyesore, and he has no opinion of such a rose as the cloth of gold, which refuses to thrive when pruned. A pyramidal azalea, the shape of a haystack, and so covered with bloom that not a single green leaf is visible to break the monotonous uniformity of its shape, is to him the perfection of art and beauty. In fact, no plant is worth much unless it requires to be kept in a hothouse all the year round. A flower that can grow without assistance is as little entitled to admiration or respect as a lady who does not require a maid to arrange her hair. He hates a primrose by the river's brim simply because it thrives without being transplanted every year, and, no matter how severe the season, bursts forth in bloom to be freely plucked by passers-by. The finest carpet of wild hyacinths or starry wind-flowers is to him mere trash ; the tallest and most pearly-white foxglove only an awkward, lanky weed, to be pulled up and thrown on the rubbish-heap. He disclaims all acquaintance with our common perennial plants, on account of a vulgar way they have of growing anywhere, and a facility for reproduction quite contemptible. He digs up the monthly roses because they are not sufficiently double to please his artificial taste ; he burns the wild honeysuckle, which crept through the hedge so prettily and dared to make acquaintance with aristocratic bedding-out plants. He invariably chooses the hottest part of the day for transplanting and watering, and gathers the fruit when it is raining. He takes possession of every green thing, and resents as an insult the slightest interference. When a suggestion is offered he perhaps replies that, if he is not supposed to know his own business he had better go elsewhere. Unfortunately he is only too well aware how helpless his employer would feel if left with only a common labourer to whom he had to give directions ; yet the amount of knowledge

necessary to enable a lady or gentleman to train an intelligent working-man is easily acquired. It is possible to have a charming garden without a greenhouse, and plenty of wall-fruit with only the help of an experienced person to do the pruning. It is the attempt to have vegetables and fruit out of their season, and to cultivate plants which cannot be acclimatized, that makes our gardens troublesome, expensive, and unproductive.

A plant may be scarce and costly, and therefore not common ; but it is ridiculous to treasure a variegated geranium until it is to be seen in cottage gardens, and then throw it away and replace it by one not half so good but which costs twice as much. It is this vulgar habit of talking of things being fashionable when "beautiful" is the word we ought to mean, that makes our houses, our parties, our pictures, our dress, so little worthy of an intelligent and cultivated nation.

How clever are the directions given by Japanese florists, whose great object seems to be by delicate devices to enable every spray to look at ease and in its right place ! They will even leave a withered branch to give natural effect, or allow a few fallen leaves to remain round the pot. True floral decoration ought to be independent of all wire and canvas, lace paper and glass dust, nor is it aided by small paltry make-believes, such as pretending that palms can grow out of table-cloths. It requires, to be successful, that the decorator should have a reverence for the natural forms of flowers and foliage, and a keen appreciation of harmony in colour. The true secret of gardening is to make the most artistic use of those plants which belong naturally to the climate and soil.

## WINDOW GARDENING.

It is wonderful what may be done in the way of gardening even in the closest London slums. There are certain flowers which seem to thrive in spite of smoke and want of light. Every one must have observed how well scarlet geraniums grow in the mews. Perhaps the ammonia exhaled from the stable litter has something to do with their thriving condition; perhaps it is that the coachmen as boys have helped in a garden, and know how to take care of them. At any rate, it must be pleasant for the women as they sit sewing to see the sun glinting through the leaves and throwing lovely dancing shadows on the homely furniture. At Leeds, Mrs. Buckton, one of the members of the School Board, has done a great deal to encourage window-gardening by supplying the children with boxes at the small price of eighteenpence. This she can do by having a number made at once. So eager is she to spread a taste for flowers that she will even take the trouble of receiving weekly instalments of a penny when the whole sum cannot be paid at once. Lady Burdett-Coutts gave away the prizes one year, and the show was most creditable. It is quite touching sometimes to watch the longing eyes of a little street arab as he gazes at a beautiful bouquet in a shop window. How pleased he is at the present of a rose, and how he rushes off to exhibit the prize to his companions round the corner.

There are few places where window gardening would prove more beneficial than in workhouses, but the flowers should be cultivated by the inmates, not by the officials, as is now too often the case. The respectable aged paupers have indeed a dreary time in these poor-law prisons. They are obliged to rise

early, even although there is little or nothing they can do when they are up and dressed. The monotonous regularity of all the arrangement is strangely depressing. The ugliness of everything is unconsciously felt. The poor old creatures cannot help grumbling, for they have little else to think about than how disagreeable are all the other inmates. Every innocent source of recreation is of immense value to such people, and there is nothing so cheap or so cheerful as flowers. In the children's wards they would develop the stunted intelligence of the homeless charity-fed little ones. Every one knows how unsatisfactory, as a rule, the girls turn out who have been brought up in a workhouse, and it is partly because they are shut out from natural sounds and sights, because they never hear a nightingale sing or gather violets along the mossy banks, because they are treated as machines, and find that the more like automatons they can become the less irksome is their position.

But it is not alone amongst the poorer classes that window gardening ought to be cultivated. We do not see why the children of the upper and middle classes should be without their flower-shows also. Why should not they too be encouraged to make gardening a pursuit? There are thousands of professional people whose families live the greater part of the year in a London street. Every window in such a street might be made to blaze with beautiful flowers; nor would the assistance of the nurseryman be required if the denizens of the home nursery were encouraged to love gardening. As it is, they know little or nothing about flowers beyond the names of what they see hawked about the squares and planted geometrically in the parks. The poor little creatures do sometimes try to make daisy-chains in Kensington Gardens, but generally with the result of getting their fingers slapped by nurse because they have dirtied their gloves or smeared their faces. They

insist upon spending odd pennies of pocket-money on ferns and plants of snowdrop, but they cannot get any earth in which to plant them when they bring them home. Indeed there is scarcely anything so difficult to procure in London as good potting compost. A small fortune might be realised by any one who would hawk it about at a reasonable rate. A great deal that is sold has already been used in pots, and all the nourishment taken out of it. But the place for town children to do their gardening is on the leads. At present, in the greater number of instances, these valuable bits of breathing ground are given over to the cats and the snuts. They also form an invaluable battle ground for the servants, as no one thinks it is his or her business to sweep them. Instead of the dreary, dirty, miserable place that is to be seen through the staircase window in most houses, there might be, with a little trouble and at a trifling expense, a bright, sweet window garden on a large scale. All that is required is knowledge of what are the plants suitable for cultivation, and a hose to keep them clean. There is no aspect so cheerless that a Virginian creeper will not try to cover its desolation. There is no place you can put window balm that will quite extinguish its love of life. The common moneywort manages to look cheerful and contented in dark, dismal areas, and flowers in the most praiseworthy manner in spite of want of sunshine.

The best way to start a town child with a garden is to give it some pots of bulbs and some hyacinth-glasses in the autumn. Watching the sprouting of the leaves, putting the plants in the sunshine, protecting them from frost, and wondering what colours they may assume, will employ a good deal of the time which in winter hangs heavy in the nursery. Some common cacti may stand on a chimney-piece and will well repay the little care they require. In the spring a few

pennyworths of seeds will give more pleasure and do less harm than the same amount of money spent in sweetmeats. Mignonette, nasturtium, and Virginian stock scarcely ever fail to bloom if they are sown in proper soil; and many other plants might be named. Then papa could no doubt be persuaded to have some stones taken up in the areas and a magnolia, a passion-flower, and two or three different kinds of jessamine planted. Fruit-trees, too, would do in a great many situations, as they are not at all sensitive to impure air or circumscribed space.

A fern-case made of new toughened glass would be a charming birthday present for a child, and remain a source of delight much longer than many more expensive playthings. There are few kinds of window gardening more satisfactory for a permanence than these cases, because the plants are protected from smuts, and the damp atmosphere prevents them suffering from the effects of gas or smoke. But children like better to have good-sized boxes, where they can plant many flowers, and at least pretend to dig. Unfortunately, nurse is a great obstructive to the little would-be gardeners, and is very severe upon dirtied frocks or crushed shirt-cuffs, and what she calls "making a mess." Brown holland blouses would soon solve this difficulty, and protect alike jackets and dresses. The hours spent in training the creepers and washing the ivy leaves would cultivate a taste for simple natural pleasures in which the little boys and girls of the nineteenth century are sadly deficient. By judicious window gardening, by planting trees in all our streets, by covering every vacant corner with a natural veil of green, we might change the whole aspect of our great towns. Young ladies who call London the "modern Babylon"—no one knows why—might very well amuse themselves by trying to make it more like the ancient city in this one particular of hanging gardens.

## AN ONLY CHILD.

To a little girl who is an only child, educated by a governess, the season of Christmastide brings little of joy. Home for the holidays has for her no meaning. There is no one for whom to prepare an unexpected birthday treat. No elder sister delights her with a new set of doll's clothes. There is no younger one to be surprised with a secretly worked present. No big brother invades the nursery to have a game of romps, or teaches her to bear a good teasing and a little chaff without losing her temper. There is no sick baby to whom to give her favourite toy, and watch with a smile of honest delight while he breaks it to pieces, pleased that anything should amuse the little invalid. Only children are sometimes treated rather unjustly, and simply classed as odious specimens of distorted childhood. Very often they deserve this condemnation; but see a little lonely girl in the country. With nature she has a subtle sympathy and companionship. The trees have to her living voices, and she has a particular and personal friendship for each rosebush. The present of a bunch of sweet flowers in winter will affect her to tears, and there is a deep tender joy in her eyes as she picks the first snowdrop or discovers the hitherto unperceived little golden ball of aconite amongst the snow. If imaginative, she peoples the woods with the fairies of whom she is so fond of reading, and almost persuades herself that little elves flutter their wings among the grass or hide from the sun under the toadstools. The birds are not afraid of her, and seem to know she takes a maternal interest



in their nestlings. When lying in the sun upon a bed of wood anemones and blue hyacinths, with a bunch of primroses in her hand, perhaps she feels as much joy as if she had a dozen playfellows. More of her affection will be bestowed upon birds and beasts than if she had brothers and sisters upon whom to expend it; and she may often be found confiding her secrets to some ill-conditioned cur to whom she has taken an inexplicable and violent fancy. Good advice will be mingled freely with caresses, and we have heard exhortations upon the strait gate and narrow way delivered to a very unpromising-looking cat well known to the cook for its thieving propensities. Her mother will take her to visit amongst the poor. She will early learn that there are such things as sorrow, poverty, sickness, and death. She will hear various subjects talked of openly in cottages which are not generally mentioned in society, and will know about many things not usually spoken of before the dangerous age of curiosity has been reached. She will probably be quite an experienced little sick nurse, a capital teacher in the Sunday-school, and be able to delight the old women at the almshouses by singing to them their favourite hymns. She will have made dozens of flannel petticoats, and know about all the little girls in the village who want places.

The town child is a being of quite another order. She hears and remembers passages of conversation which would not attract the attention of a child engaged in play. In her loneliness she broods over opinions on religion and sociology which she has heard expressed by her father's friends while sitting on his knee at the study fire. Though she may not take part in political discussions as our little Transatlantic cousins do, still questions of the day have a fatal interest for the nineteenth-century town child. She knows a good deal about "woman's rights," and

perhaps aspires to be some day a member of Parliament. If permitted, she will read the newspapers with avidity, pick out with discrimination the best murders and the most exciting cases of wife-beating, and will revel in the last breach of promise of marriage. She knows all about the Claimant, whom she has seen at Mme. Tussaud's, and is much interested in the destinies of the Prince Imperial. If she is asked to commit a poem to memory, and is given a choice, it will almost certainly be a passionate love song, or else something most lugubrious, such as the "Last Man," or "There is a reaper whose name is Death." We have heard a little town girl of seven repeat the whole of *Maud*, evidently learnt entirely for her own pleasure. If it is a question of hymns, one of the first selected is sure to be "There is a land of pure delight." The unknown has always a strong interest for such a solitary child as this. She often puzzles over the problems connected with a future state; and the workings of her mind, could they be watched, would astonish older people. On the whole, however, she generally prefers fairy tales to every other kind of literature. The descriptions of games she has never played, the accounts of nursery quarrels and sweet reconciliations of which she knows nothing, the tales of little troubles with schoolfellows which she scarcely understands, do not much concern her. *Queechy*, with its single heroine, is more interesting than Miss Yonge's *Daisy Chain*; and she prefers the account of a boy lost on a desert island to the story of his troubles amongst brothers at home. At a children's party she is entirely out of her element. Knowing none of the usual games, she is put aside and voted stupid. Being sensitive, she may soon be found sitting amongst the grown-up people, her natural friends, not because she is what is called old-fashioned, but because she is unacquainted with childish pastimes,

and does not know how to join in them. She cannot say, "Onery, twoery, dickery, davy;" but see her at home entertaining visitors when mamma is absent, and there is no trace of the embarrassed child of the evening party. She makes little polite speeches about mamma's regrets, inquires for the invalids, pours out afternoon tea, and talks of the weather like a young lady of many seasons. She is also an adept at carrying messages, and is a useful aid in the house. Sometimes, with cook's assistance, she can arrange about dinner, and is quick to see any little negligence in the housemaid's work, or the laying of the dinner-table. She criticizes the cookery, to the extreme horror of her mother's guests, accustomed to better-behaved young people. They go away lamenting her bringing up, and prophesy all manner of evil results.

Such a child speaks of love and marriage with the coolness of a philosopher, and does not hesitate to cross-examine her married friends upon the reasons they had for the choices they have made. She will imitate Dr. Wolf by unblushingly asking some shy couple who are engaged in a little mild but unmeaning flirtation when they are going to be married. If not quite pleased with papa—perhaps he has lately been punishing her—she has been known to represent to her mother that there are many people she meets whom she considers much more worthy of the honour of being her parent than the person who at present stands to her in that relation. When her mother, not unwilling to turn the conversation, suggests that, as she seems to have studied the subject of marriage so early and with so much attention, it is to be hoped that her husband will be the perfection of young manhood, the little maiden probably announces her intention to marry some one who will let her do what she likes, and who has plenty of carriages and horses. If her father is a doctor, she will express a disbelief

in medicine ; if he is a parson, she will dislike going to church ; if he is an author, she protests nothing will induce her to marry a "littery" man ; if he is an archæologist, she will, as in a case we recently saw, even refuse to visit an aquarium, misreading the name and suspecting a trap—"she has enough of anti-quariums at home." Of sick people she is rather impatient, expecting every one to be ready to attend to her when she wants attention, and hints rather unfeelingly that invalids ought either to get well, or to die and have done with it. When she is away from home—a rare occurrence—her letters are eagerly looked for. They truly reflect, though doubtful in spelling, the mood in which they were written. She asks for all sorts of things with happy confidence that they will be sent her if possible, and details her small adventures knowing that they will be interesting to those at home. Her letters to acquaintances are as straightforward as those to mamma. She does not scruple to answer an invitation by simply writing, "Dear Mrs. Jones, I would rather not go to your party to-day." When she is taken to the theatre, her criticisms, conveyed in a penetrating and too audible stage-whisper, are frequently embarrassing. She vehemently objects to Miss Helen Faucit's Rosalind, and thinks that man Shakespeare did not know how to call his plays, for it was impossible for him to know whether she would like this one or not. Lord Dunderbary has no charms for her. She cannot understand why so many people go to see a silly man. After weeping showers of tears over the pantomime of *The Babes in the Wood*, she insists on leaving as soon as she find she has been imposed upon, and that the children upon whose untimely fate she has spent both her own and her mother's pocket-handkerchiefs appear bowing and smiling from under the leaves with which the phantom robins have covered them.

If she lives in London, this nineteenth-century child is most probably broad in her religious views. She can quite understand Eve eating the forbidden fruit, for she has considerable experience in such small disobediences ; but as to that little trunk called the Ark, of which there is a picture in her Bible History, having contained all those animals, she simply won't believe it. Had they and the Noah family been packed in layers and squeezed very tight, as they are in her Ark, it might have been possible ; but then all their legs and Noah's arms would have been broken. Her private devotions are sometimes scenes of untimely mirth. She will say "Birds in their little nests agree" instead of the Evening Hymn, and has been known to threaten to omit the Lord's Prayer altogether unless allowed to practice the new accomplishment of turning head over heels between each petition. Accustomed to see people exercise self-control, she is, though generally talkative, really reticent of her true feelings, and will often bear pain with the fortitude of a hero. With all her faults one cannot help admiring her intolerance of shams and her impatience of little commonplace speeches which she does not believe to be true. She is a fatal enemy to pretence of any kind, being as much without fear as without discretion. If she grows up she will have many things to suffer. Accustomed to be first, she will sometimes find herself last. The world will not look at her through her mother's eyes, and often will she be made to lament even with tears that she was an only child.



## AMATEUR GOVERNESSES.

A severe but well-deserved attack on a worthless historical book having appeared in a certain periodical, a gentleman known to be on the staff of the paper was asked if he had written it. He replied that he entirely agreed with the review, but could not have written it, as he knew the author of the book had thirteen children, and depended on his pen to feed and clothe them. Some such feeling prevents people who are thoroughly aware of the lamentable inefficiency of a large proportion of our English governesses from expressing their opinions on the subject publicly as they ought to do. They think it cruel to prevent well-meaning and destitute young women from earning a livelihood in the only line apparently open to them. In pity for the would-be governesses, who are no doubt much to be commiserated, they forget the children who will suffer irreparable injury from ignorant and inefficient teaching.

It is a mistaken philanthropy which would sacrifice the rising generation to provide occupation for the portionless daughters of professional men. It is scarcely prudent to shut our eyes to a state of things which is likely to grow worse instead of better. The supply of competent governesses is already far below the demand. A benevolent lady who started a Home for governesses, and thought to be able to provide families with suitable teachers, was obliged to close it; she could find so few wanting situations whom she could conscientiously recommend. It will soon be scarcely possible to get good teachers at anything like a moderate salary. Sensible girls will endeavour to fit themselves to become mistresses in the middle-class schools rising on all sides, in which salaries as

high as several hundreds a year may be expected in some cases. Others will take situations under the School Boards, which can be made fairly remunerative. Some, with a taste for music, will learn to play sufficiently well on the violin or viola to take their place in an orchestra, while those who have a taste for drawing will soon discover openings for themselves as decorators. There is literary employment to be found by women who, though they may not be able to write a successful novel, may yet earn a fair income by hard work. The clever and accomplished teachers who, recognizing the dignity of their calling, have learnt how to fulfil their duties, will easily find situations amongst the rich and upper classes. The prim, experienced governess, who is determined to mould all her pupils after one pattern, will never be without pupils to fossilize. Only the uneducated, listless, useless young girls who are driven each year into the profession merely by poverty will be left for those who are not able to pay a large salary and are unwilling to send their daughters to school. If local examinations of children under private tuition could be held by School Inspectors, parents would soon become aware of the unsatisfactory position which their little girls hold in comparison with those under the care of the State. They might perhaps be persuaded to be content for the present with fewer accomplishments, and induced to start some inexpensive training colleges, where instruction in the theory and method of teaching would be given, and notice taken of practical ability in imparting knowledge.

It is no exaggeration to assert that there are at present thousands of women holding the situations of governesses who have had no proper education, no necessary training, and who are entirely destitute of the moral force indispensable to success in their employment. It would be strange if it were otherwise.



Many girls know that on the death of their parents they will be obliged to do something whereby they may eat a morsel of bread, but they try to forget the unwelcome fact, and trust to marriage or the chapter of accidents to relieve them from their dreaded fate. At last, however, the sad necessity comes when perhaps least expected. Forced to decide at once, they determine to become governesses. Not even the preliminary examination in reading, writing, and arithmetic, which a man would have to pass in order to become hall-porter at one of the Government offices, is required. To take an everyday type, let us imagine the daughter of an obscure country doctor, and consider the preparation she receives for becoming an instructress of youth. She is brought up in a narrow circle of commonplace people, with no means of enlarging her mind by social intercourse, but every opportunity of getting it debased by village gossip. No box of library books comes to tell her of the achievements of science, or the new lights thrown on history and on hitherto unexplored countries. She never dreams of studying the Bible, the Shakspeare, the Milton, the Gibbon, which lie covered with dust on her father's shelves. No reviews or better-class magazines are within her reach. She knows nothing and cares nothing about home politics or the complications of foreign States. Perhaps she has not even been allowed to read the few newspapers which find their way to her retired home. She is certain not to have the faintest idea of the present boundaries of European States, and to be quite in the dark about the simplest questions of political economy. She finds her most congenial reading in the *Family Herald*, and thinks that most value for her scarce sixpences is to be had in the novels republished from *Bow Bells*. She can play a little dance music and sing a few trumpery

songs, but it is very probable that she has never in her life heard a fine piece of music finely performed. She perhaps paints impossible flowers on cardboard fire-screens, and may have seen an exhibition at the Royal Academy ; but she knows nothing about art, and could not draw a cup and saucer from the round. She knows scarcely anything about the scenery or architecture of her own country, and would not dream of trying to learn about the birds, the ferns, the wild flowers, the butterflies, the trees which surround her home. She cannot write an ordinary business letter with clearness or in faultless grammar, nor perhaps even spell correctly. She has happily so far forgotten any little French she once knew that she does not quote that language in ordinary conversation, but only uses certain phrases in writing of whose meaning she is not very clear. Her greatest excitement has been the coming of age of the young squire, and the only break in the monotony of her life the successive flirtations she has had with the raw youths who have been her father's assistants. Not having been able to secure one of these as a husband, she is at last driven to seek for a situation as governess, and advertises that she can teach English in all its branches, music, drawing, geography, and modern languages.

More fatal even than her ignorance is the distaste with which she undertakes work when she succeeds in getting any. It is to her an odious treadmill, a forced labour, an uncongenial employment, a position more or less of degradation. The ordinary amateur governess, who is driven by necessity to teaching as a means whereby to provide herself with board and lodging, enters her situation as a convict under sentence enters his prison. She is obliged to spend a certain number of hours daily in what she is pleased to call the education of her pupils. It is with a sigh of relief that she sees the lesson books put back in their cupboards, and

can take up her lacework. She hails with scarcely concealed delight an unexpected holiday, a picnic, even an attack of illness, or a death in the house—anything which will relieve her for even a little while from the monotony of the task which becomes increasingly irksome. She does not think highly of her office, so she cannot prevent her pupils from despising it. At one time she domineers unnecessarily to show her power. At another she overlooks disobedience to the laws she has made, and which, having been made, ought to be enforced. She is ignorant, therefore she naturally resents questions being asked which she fancies are intended to test her acquirements. She deals with her small quantity of information as a treasure to be imparted in scanty detached portions at rare times, but too precious to be given in large doses. She has no store of illustrations or details to make history a living study to her pupils, nor any reminiscences of places, or recollections of travels she has read, to render a lesson in geography interesting. When in a good humour, she confides to her pupils the details of her domestic troubles and the small trivialities of her early life, and reads them her love-letters, if she is so fortunate as to have received any. She is familiar with them in a wrong way, and weakens her authority and lowers herself in their eyes in order to gain their friendship, forgetting that children are very sharp and keenly alive to discover human weaknesses. They are always watching their teachers to discover little flaws in them in return for the rebukes they receive for their own imperfections.

We want a new system of training for governesses which shall insist on some knowledge of physiology. Few are now properly instructed in the laws of health, so that they are not prepared to perceive quickly and make allowance for the temporary derangements to which all children are subject. They

will call a pupil naughty who is only nervous, and another idle who has simply got a fit of indigestion, and is unable to use her faculties properly.

A French lady, in an excellent little manual called *Pupil versus Teacher*, gives it as her opinion that the training of youthful minds cannot be properly done by a spiritless teacher driven by necessity to undertake the employment, and perpetually brooding over the troubles which have forced her to provide for her own maintenance. This lady further remarks that, from her own experience, she considers that English girls up to the age of ten are charming, and have every attractive quality which ought to belong to childhood; that they are really quite ideal pupils, having "warm feelings, pretty ways, original ideas, quick perceptions, a good memory, a ready intelligence, a great desire for information." She does not draw at all the same flattering picture of these same girls at sixteen, and considers that, through sheer mismanagement, they have been brought to dislike learning and to find all study distasteful. They have not acquired the gentle forbearance, subtle sympathy, ready tact, courteous deference, and well-cultivated taste which a Frenchwoman thinks of such importance to her children. At sixteen they are listless, reserved, and indifferent to things in which their interest ought to have been cultivated. They have either lost their warm feelings or do not show them, their manners are brusque, and the soft graces, the harmonious tastes, the gracious deportment which are expected from a woman have been ignored in the schoolroom, and not taught by the mothers. Their knowledge of music is superficial and without discrimination; about art, in the true sense of the word, they know nothing. "Their memory, burdened with absurd fragments of science, is weakened; their intelligence, wasted on superficial smatterings, is

undeveloped ; their thirst for knowledge, lacking proper stimulant, has perished altogether." Such is the opinion of a French teacher of experience, an opinion in which many girls who have lately passed through the schoolroom and are now feeling the deficiencies of their education will be strongly inclined to agree.

A mother resigns her children into the hands of a person of whom she knows little or nothing, and yet the ordinary governess is not expected to train them in any of the things most important to them in after life. These are supposed to come with long dresses and late dinners. All that might help to form the judgment, exercise the powers of reflection, teach a wise reticence and encourage an honourable candour, or enable the mind to form a judicious opinion upon conflicting statements—all, in short, which would really enlarge the intellect is left out of the education of the girls who are entrusted to the care of untrained, undeveloped amateur governesses.

## GIRLS IN THE SCHOOLROOM.

It is strange that, notwithstanding all the interest that is at present aroused about education, no one, not even Mr. Newdegate, has agitated for an inquiry into the condition of our little girls of the better classes. No one has proposed an inspection of the stuffy and ill-ventilated schoolroom where they too often toil and weep, yet grow up delicate, ignorant, and useless. No one insists upon having training colleges and compulsory Government examinations for the women who are to have the teaching of our upper and middle classes. People of a certain rank are supposed to be able to take care of the health and education of their own children. But experience

shows this to be an entirely false supposition. Disregard of the laws of health is not confined to those who live in cottages, and the fact that a girl has had a governess for ten years does not prove that she is well educated. One mother from ignorance will fail in having her daughters properly taught, whilst another will consider an expert French maid a person of much more importance than her nursery governess, and will pay her ungrudgingly a much higher salary. We want an Elizabeth Fry to inspect the schoolroom prisons, and take up the cause of our little English girls, who only confide their troubles to sympathizing old nurses or to half-incredulous schoolboy brothers.

The uncomplaining endurance of nice children brought up in large families is something very remarkable. "Telling tales" they think an unpardonable crime. They are therefore usually silent about a great deal that goes on in the nursery which their parents would disapprove were they aware of it. They take as a matter of course any ill-temper, deceit, or injustice of which their governesses may be guilty in the schoolroom. At least they generally do so, and will keep quiet unless roused by seeing a little brother or sister bullied. They then tell tales in their righteous indignation, and their parents perhaps discover that the governess who was so highly recommended to them as a universal genius is entirely unfit to have the charge of children. They discharge her, and as likely as not get some one quite as unfit for her post. It is a pity one of the Commissioners of Education could not unseen spend a few mornings in some of the schoolrooms in which little girls wash their slates with their tears, yet never thoroughly master the simple rules of arithmetic, where they labour over *Mangnall's Questions*, but know nothing of history; and where, hating music, they are yet compelled to practise many weary hours every day.



The room is probably the smallest in the house. If in a town, it is perhaps a dingy back room looking out on the leads. As it contains a piano, a book-case, a large table, a reclining board, and at least half a dozen chairs, there is not much cubic space left for air to breathe. On a hot summer day it would be a hard-hearted person who did not commiserate the victims of what might be supposed to be the height of barbarism, but is in reality the result of a high state of civilization. A child may be heard attempting by the aid of memory alone, no map being allowed in this lesson, to describe the courses of the Don, the Dnieper, the Dniester, and the Danube, in which attempt she is signally unsuccessful, and only manages to puzzle herself hopelessly and for life on the subject. The geography is put aside to be relearnt, and she goes on with her task in *Mangnall's Questions*. Out of that mine of information her governess has crammed her with a little undigested information. The child has succeeded with much pains in retaining a few facts, such as that "the two distinguishing traits in Cromwell's character were hypocrisy and ambition," that "stops were first introduced in the reign of Elizabeth," and that the University of Cambridge was commenced by Sigbert, King of the East Angles, in 630. She also learns that it is a most remarkable fact that John of Gaunt never came to the throne. Her sister is meantime gazing dejectedly at an exercise in syntax, and vainly trying to discover the mistake in such a sentence as, "We have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images which we have once received into all the varieties of picture and vision." Poor child! what with heat and the indolence of mind which has been allowed to grow upon her, she has no power of retaining anything except a vision of how delightful the garden must be looking, particularly the honeysuckle seat under the



beech-tree. She tries another sentence, and here she is quite willing to allow that there must be something wrong in such an assertion as that "Our tutors are benefactors who we owe obedience to, and who we ought to love." It would be trying to assent to the proposition under the circumstances, so she feels quite ready to correct it in sense, if not in grammar. Another sister is involved in a painful struggle with a sum which she could easily do if she had the faintest idea what all these figures meant. It is not much help to the pupils that all through lesson time a jangling noise called practising the piano should be going on, nor does it help the teacher to keep her head clear. Governesses as a rule are subject to toothache, and do not like open windows; consequently before half the morning lessons are over the pupils feel exhausted, stupid, and cross, and their teacher has not improbably become unreasonable and indiscriminating. She praises the girl who repeats her lesson with parrot-like precision, and thus saves her trouble. She scolds the slower, but perhaps more painstaking, child who has no faculty for learning by rote what her understanding has not completely mastered. The poor little wretch is accused of idleness and obstinacy, and kept in to learn texts of Scripture during her playhours. Complaints are made to her parents, who think it their duty to support the governess. The child becomes bewildered by the accusations made against her, and cannot explain matters to her own or any one else's satisfaction. When she goes to bed she cries herself to sleep over her unlearnt lessons, her lost play hours, and feels weighed down with the sense of remorse which blame, just or unjust, always brings to a child. She awakes unrefreshed to begin over again the same weary round, which is only lightened by the hope that a day will come when Joyce's *Scientific Dialogues* may be replaced

by the last three-volume novel, and the dancing lessons practised in the county ballroom. Instead of wishing to continue her studies when she leaves the schoolroom, she is sick to death of them, and, if she marries, is only too glad to find an excuse to discontinue her practising, or put aside her paint-brush. Poets sing about happy childhood, but we are not sure that civilization has not robbed childhood of much of its joy. No doubt children forget their woes sooner than their parents can, and perhaps they enjoy their pleasures with a keener zest. They have the consolation of toffy and pets, dolls and unripe fruit, and find a heavenly calm sometimes in sucking their thumbs. Still they have sorrows, and they suffer more than most people suspect. The worst of it is that their sufferings are very likely to do them permanent harm. Many a valuable intellect has been rendered useless by injudicious early training, and many a fine character spoilt in passing through the schoolroom.

Many a clergyman sees the children in his parish school getting a really better education than he can procure for his own. He tries to persuade himself that a smattering of European languages, and the power of playing Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words" wrong on the piano, will make up for the want of the solid foundation which the certificated master, who has learnt to teach, is able to give to the labourer's child. At any rate he thinks he has no choice, for he cannot afford to spend more money than he already does. It perhaps cannot be expected that he should dispense with a governess, teach his little girls Latin and cricket, imbue them with a love for the best literature in their own language, encourage them to spout Shakspeare and make their own clothes. After all, it is not so much matter what children learn so that they acquire the power of concentrated attention.

When they strike out a line for themselves, as they are almost sure to do, if they have the gift of application they will get on. Lady Duff Gordon was not the less well educated because she was not taught what are called accomplishments. She learnt to use her eyes, and her memory, and her reason, and truly valuable she found her desultory but excellent training. The great aim of education ought to be to teach children how to make use of their own minds. The mental activity which is at first an effort will gradually become a habit, and a good and enduring foundation will be laid. The mental indolence which girls now acquire in the schoolroom is fatal to intellectual development. They learn it partly from being helped over difficulties instead of being made to master them, and partly from the dawdling and waiting to say their lessons which it is almost impossible to help when each child of a number is in a different stage of proficiency.

If parents who cannot afford efficient governesses would be content to have their little girls taught writing, geography, and arithmetic by the village schoolmaster, and would read with them history and general literature; if they would encourage them to learn botany and a little chemistry, and to draw from common objects; if they would allow them to help in the garden, the house, and the dairy, we should have a better educated, more refined, and less frivolous race than our present governesses are likely to give us. Knowing what girls' schools too commonly are, we almost shrink from the responsibility of adding that, if they want a really thorough education for their girls, such as boys can get, they must send them to school. Still there really are fairly good girls' schools to be found in the world, and the painstaking quest of a sensible parent may very possibly be rewarded.

## GIRLS AT SCHOOL.

It is no doubt quite right that people who can afford to pay large sums for the education of their daughters should not be interfered with by School Boards or Government Inspectors. It would of course be the height of impertinence to question the merits of any teaching which costs several hundreds a year, and the British Constitution does not at present prevent rich parents from injuring the health of their children or deadening their intellectual faculties. But, considering the large number of fussy and benevolent beings who are always putting their fingers into pies that do not belong to them, and getting up imaginary grievances in order to write letters to the *Times*, it is strange that the English school-girl has hitherto been without a champion to call public attention to her wrongs. They are by no means few, nor are they unimportant. It cannot fail to be a matter of moment what sort of training several thousand young girls likely to hold positions of influence are now receiving. This is surely of nearly as much consequence as whether there are half-a-dozen discontented nuns in convents who wish to be released from their vows.

Attention has been called to the subject lately in one or two periodicals, but people go on calmly sending their girls to school and then complain that when "finished," they settle down into idle, frivolous, selfish, useless, and discontented young women. Parents are puzzled to imagine how this should be the principal result of hard study and few indulgences. But they are puzzled only because they have never seriously considered the disadvantages of the system from which their children have suffered. They were willing to pay for a certain result, and having paid, consider

themselves ill-treated that it has not been attained. Surprised they would not be were they to watch the routine of an ordinary middle-class boarding-school for one day in mid-winter.

Take the case of a girl of fifteen, conscientious and anxious to improve herself. In winter she rises long before it is light in the morning, before perhaps even the early hour appointed. She struggles with a feeling of oppression and languor occasioned by sleeping in the same room with several other girls, and breathing all night a vitiated atmosphere. The gas in the room does not improve the state of the air, and there are no ventilators ; perhaps even the register of the grate is shut. In all probability there are not adequate tubing arrangements ; certainly no hot water is allowed. The poor victim breaks the ice on her jug, and uses as small a quantity as possible of the hard water. It is not improbable she has inflamed chilblains which have kept her awake half the night. Hungry, sleepy, and languid, she begins her piano practice in a room without a fire. At the end of an hour she is stupid with cold, and has a violent headache. There is no use in complaining, for several of her companions are in a similar condition, and they sit down to breakfast shivering in the dreary grey dawn. After breakfast perhaps a monotonous half-hour's walk, which is supposed to be good for the health, but seems only to have the result of fatiguing the children before their day's work has well begun. Then comes a long morning, in which class succeeds class with scarcely any intermission. Latin, French, German, music, drawing, have all to be squeezed in, as well as the other lessons which belong to a good English education. The latter of themselves would be enough to fill up the whole time. After an early dinner, if the day is fine, there is another dreary stroll ; but every one rejoices if the weather is wet, for then there is a little

time for idleness or play. The classes begin again in the afternoon, and last until tea-time; perhaps even after that the preparation for the next day must be got through. If there is no hour before bed-time in which relaxation is insisted on, the industrious girls will work up to the last moment, and then dream half the night of unprepared lessons or problems they cannot solve. Feverish restlessness is the natural result of overstraining young brains, and not giving the muscles vigorous, healthy exercise and play. Not that much is accomplished after all in the way of learning; far from it; and worst of all, they are never taught how to learn. The time given to lessons is too long to be advantageously employed. It is impossible that it can be good for either the mind or body of a growing girl to spend nine or ten hours a day in head-work, particularly when the greater part of the time is passed in an overcrowded, stuffy school-room. Boys have a great advantage over girls in this respect. Their classrooms are much larger, more numerous, and better ventilated. They are not hung with curtains, or covered with carpets which can scarcely be kept free from dust. Then, too, boys have another advantage over girls in the liberty they enjoy during their play hours. They are not constantly under inspection. Their games of cricket and foot-ball are admirable tonics after a morning of hard work. The healthy glow of exercise sends a fresh current through the tired brain, and completely changes the course of their thoughts. But of this invigorating sensation the properly brought up school-girl knows nothing. She is not allowed to warm her feet by a good run, or her hands by a boxing-match. The nearest approach she ever gets to healthy exertion is the weekly dancing lesson. If she is allowed to have riding lessons they are not of much use, for she is probably obliged to work after hours to make up for the lost time. There is certainly no care taken that

she shall have something to eat and half an hour's quiet when she returns home tired after her canter. Instead of resting her back she is perhaps doomed to an hour of singing, and receives a scolding for not being in good voice. The culpable negligence with regard to the health of the girls in most boarding-schools cannot be too severely censured. There is plenty of care and attention forthcoming when once the doctor has to be called in, and he pronounces his patient really ill; but then it is often too late to do much. The seeds of future incurable delicacy are laid in many cases from want of a little timely thought, for which no after-kindness can compensate. Few schoolmistresses have any real knowledge of physiology or of the laws of health, and yet no woman is qualified to have the care of young people who is not intimately acquainted with the general functions of the human body and with the best means by which to keep them in good working order. She should know how to distinguish between irritability and indigestion, and between idleness and illness. Childish complaints which under favourable circumstances might not be serious often become severe illnesses because no one has sense to observe the symptoms which any rational person would recognize as the precursors of some feverish disorder. The severity of an attack of measles or scarlatina often depends on the care taken of the patient while it is incubating. A walk in the wet or a sleepless night from overwork may induce symptoms for which there is no cure. Then, too, the mind requires as much care as the body. It is quite possible to wear out brain power by over-stimulation, and the clever girl who carries off a number of prizes may fade into an ignorant commonplace woman who lies all day on the sofa reading novels, and is unable to sleep without chloral.

With regard to the intellectual education given in



half the girls' boarding-schools, it is not too much to say that it is worse than none, for the reason that it disgusts the children with learning. This is of all others the result most to be avoided. The compulsory lessons learnt at school ought only to be the scaffolding for future building up. That the term "finished" should be used of a girl of seventeen shows the hollowness of the system, and proves that people have, as a rule, no idea of what education means, and that they never reflect whether the number of things usually taught can be taught properly in the time given. To insist that children shall not talk anything but French does not mean that they learn to converse in French. It simply means that they are allowed to jabber a *patois* in which gender and grammar are set at defiance, and in which mongrel words are coined in every sentence to save trouble. It means that any amount of silly talk may be carried on if partly expressed in a foreign language. It means that English conversation on sensible subjects is unknown and uncared for. There is no attempt made at meals by the presiding schoolmistress to interest the girls in the topics of the day. They never see a newspaper, nor are they encouraged to supplement the ancient history with which they are so plentifully crammed with some knowledge of the political events going on around them. All that is required of them is to be able to remember correctly a few hundred dates, many of them quite unimportant, and to commit to memory the incorrect statistics of killed and wounded in certain famous battles. They scarcely know who is Prime Minister; have not the foggiest idea as to how their own country is governed; do not understand the meaning of such words as Poor-law, Consols, Trade-Unions, Income-Tax, Disestablishment, Home Rule. A girl may be able to say by rote all the departments of France and all the rivers of Europe, and yet not

to give the faintest sketch of the changes which the great European wars have made in the divisions of the several countries, nor even of what France lost by its campaign with Germany. She may have learnt to play with tolerable brilliancy, and yet not be able to give even a slight sketch of the difference between the music of Mozart and Beethoven, or of Rossini and Wagner. She may have arrived at compound fractions in her arithmetic studies, and yet be incompetent to keep an ordinary house account-book or to make quickly a simple mental calculation. The sort of knowledge gained by cramming is painfully evanescent. It melts away with want of use, leaving nothing whatever behind. To retain for any length of time precise information on any subject requires a keen interest to have been aroused in the learner, and this is the last thing usually aimed at by school teachers.

The moral education at the greater number of boarding-schools is pretty much on a par with the intellectual culture and physical training. No doubt the girls are well grounded in Scriptural narratives and "endless genealogies." They make elaborate abstracts of the Sunday's sermon which they do not understand. They learn their collects regularly, and can repeat and sing countless hymns. But the weightier matters of the law cannot be taught by rote or inculcated except by example, and the atmosphere of most schools is not one likely to develop even well-meaning girls into noble and pure women. Too much stress is laid on little faults ; a narrow view is taken of everything ; too much is required in the way of moral courage and confession of faults. There is no wise training to fit the girls for the difficulties and temptations of life. There is no attempt made to cultivate their judgment so that they may be able to weigh dispassionately two sides of a question when presented to them. All that is required is that they should blindly obey orders.

On the subject of love or marriage they never hear a sensible word. It is supposed to be a tabooed subject, and not a proper one even to allude to. But this does not prevent a great deal of frivolous and undesirable talk being carried on amongst the girls themselves. They know it is against rule. They consequently suffer all the evils which arise from conscious wrong-doing. They are always either in a state of discomfort and remorse or become hardened and untruthful. The over-strict regulations about trivial matters which are to be found in many schools are a fatal mistake. Girls who are never allowed a moment to themselves whilst at school cannot be expected to know how to employ themselves when they leave. Young creatures cannot be made into automatons without suffering in the process. Too much repression defeats its own ends, for it arouses a spirit of rebellion or creates stolid indifference. But the worst effect is the gradual development of deceit and prevarication, which sap the foundations of a healthy character and ruin it irretrievably. Then, too, under-governesses are not, as a rule, people fit for their posts. They are hard-worked and badly paid, without culture or refinement, and their training is not always of the best. They too often have favourites amongst the pupils, and conceal their faults, whilst they are more than necessarily severe with those whom they do not like. This is very trying to girls, who feel injustice almost more bitterly than punishment.

Taking all things into consideration, it cannot be a matter for surprise that the ordinary school-girl is no "miracle of womanhood," gracious with tact and tenderness ; that she is ignorant, prejudiced, idle, and useless. Shut out from the society of all men but her music-master and the parson of the parish, it is not strange that, when introduced into the world, she should either at once develop into a thorough-paced flirt

or take refuge in mild monosyllables and silly shyness. She is either unable to carry on a sensible conversation with any one wearing a coat, or she is never happy without some man dancing attendance on her. She imagines he is in love if he presents her with a bunch of blackberries out of the hedge; and if he is a married man the romance is the more complete, for it has that spice of wickedness which she has heard is necessary to a brilliant love affair. But all this is not her fault; it is the fault of the parents who have neglected her education. Women may not have any rights; but certainly girls who are now sent to boarding-schools have many wrongs.

## BOYS AT HOME.

Education has always supplied reformers with a fruitful theme for discussion. It has been so since the days of Hophni and Phineas. It will be so until the millennium renders education obsolete. On no other subject, except perhaps that of religion, do sensible people disagree so widely. On few do rival doctors differ more completely both as to diagnosis and treatment. One physician asserts that hard intellectual labour is injurious to growing girls, whilst a lady M.D. of much experience writes an able paper to prove that mental work strengthens their constitutions. A gentleman proclaims the merits of the present system of pauper education, because he is acquainted with an estimable clergyman educated in a pauper-school, and because the said clergyman has recently been presented to a living worth a thousand a year. On the other hand, a lady denounces the same system and favours boarding-out for young paupers, because the account she receives of the subsequent career of

the girls is not edifying. Old-fashioned people often insist that servants have steadily deteriorated ever since they learnt to read and write fluently. Mrs. Crawshay, on the contrary, seeks to demonstrate that a knowledge of music makes the housemaid dust the rooms better, and that an acquaintance with modern languages, particularly French, will assist her maid to make becoming bonnets out of apparently useless materials. One mother will begin the education of her baby by whipping it as soon as it has cut its teeth, whilst another mother will spare the rod, and allow her children to run wild until they have changed their milk-teeth for a more permanent set. One father will teach his boy to fire off a gun before he can carry it, whilst another will not allow his boy a knife to cut a stick. Some people approve of competition as an incentive to learning, and others think such an element highly immoral. There is, however, one point upon which almost every one seems to be agreed. It is that a knowledge of the three R's is necessary to those who are obliged to earn their own livelihood, but who wish to do so in other ways than by manual labour. Curious to say, it is in a real knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic that our young men are often found most deficient. Ask an average boy of sixteen who has been at a good school to read aloud a leader in the *Times*, and the chances are you have to stop your ears. Ask him to write a simple note of inquiry, and he looks aghast, although perhaps he has carried off a prize for Latin composition. Give him a house account-book to add up, and request him to make an abstract of the weekly bills of the grocer for a month, and he is absolutely helpless, and yet he may have reached the sixth book of Euclid. Send him to do some shopping, and he can scarcely calculate what he has spent, and what change he ought to bring back. No wonder so many lads get into debt when they are

obliged to cater for themselves, and have never learnt the price of anything beyond lollipops and lemonade.

It is from the time when a child need no longer remain in the nursery until he is ready to go to school that a wise mother will claim him as her pupil, and will teach him those lessons which are only to be learnt at home, and which are of considerable importance to him in after-life. It is very nice that a boy should know his Latin grammar well before he goes to school, and even some Greek ; but, after all, the dead languages will be pounded into him somehow, and there are other things which he ought to learn while he has the opportunity. The child who can read aloud, modulate his voice, attend to the stops, and enunciate his words distinctly, may be a dunce in other things, but he will find the accomplishment so easily acquired of lifelong advantage to him. Much may be done to simplify the process of learning to write by encouraging children to send play-letters to each other, or to absent members of the family. Governesses have hitherto steadily set their faces against their pupils learning to write in any but the orthodox way of copying a foolish sentence, with long words, in a ruled book. They persist in saying that allowing them to scribble in their own way on stray pieces of paper or on a slate "cramps" their hands, and prevents them from ever learning to spell correctly. This is a pernicious and widespread delusion. Even if the notion had any truth in it, all objections might be got over by encouraging the children to copy printed letters—an excellent plan by the way to form a legible hand. There is nothing that cultivates a boy so rapidly and in so satisfactory a direction as being able to put into writing anything he wants to say. The inscription so oddly composed, so phonetically spelled, which adorns the fly-leaf of the Tennyson presented last birthday to his mother, the first lisping



numbers in which "mine" rhymes to Valentine, the magniloquent prose epitaph on a dog or canary-bird loved and lost—all such things may be utterly ridiculous, and may bring a blush in after-years to the downy cheek, but the time devoted to their composition was not thrown away. It is very desirable that when a boy goes to school, writing home should present no difficulties. A few lines in pencil to tell how he has gained a place in his class, or had a splendid paper-hunt, the power of easily replying to a little sister's letter, will keep up the close ties of home which ought not to be undervalued. We have known educated gentlemen who would rather walk a mile to answer a letter than write half-a-dozen lines. The strange compositions that may often be seen in the newspapers, with respectable names appended to them, show how very useful a little early education and practice in letter-writing would be to public men.

A little practical knowledge of arithmetic also is very easily acquired. The first three rules can be taught by a few pieces of paper torn up and made into sums, so as to give the pupil something more than an abstract idea of what figures mean. Many young men get into debt because they have never been accustomed to manage an allowance; everything has been paid for them. The number of pence in a shilling, of shillings in a pound, is not to be acquired by learning tables, but by spending money and keeping an account of it. The boy who is accustomed to provide himself with certain articles out of a fixed sum will, by the time he is grown up, have an idea of what things cost. A regular allowance can scarcely be begun too soon. Parents might perhaps confide to their elder children the actual state of their finances more frequently than they do. They would often be rewarded for their confidence by a sense of chivalry amongst the boys preventing them from spending



at college more than was necessary. The lads would be ashamed to encroach, as they so often do, on the slender portions laid by for their sisters. In families not engaged in business there is no possible reason why the children should not know a good deal about income and expenditure. A profound mystery is generally made of the subject. The consequence is that the young people think their father is a sponge full of gold-dust, out of whom as much money as possible is to be squeezed. They are often greatly surprised when upon his death they find how little remains to be divided amongst them.

To be shut up in a small town-house during wet weather with half-a-dozen youths home for the holidays is not always heaven upon earth. The principal use they make of their fingers is to produce disagreeable and unearthly noises. Their feet are employed in wearing out the carpets and shuffling on and off their slippers. They cannot even strum a popular tune on the piano to amuse themselves, nor join together in a simple glee. Writing letters they find such hard work that they would prefer to spend a day on the treadmill rather than compose one. Reading is a bore after the story-books have been exhausted. To get up a charade would be too much trouble, and in order to kill time they are reduced to counting the raindrops on the window and "beggar my neighbour," or to teasing their sisters and playing practical jokes upon the servants. It is not to schools that we ought to look for the practical and primary education which is imperatively necessary for boys who are to make their own way in the world in this country or in the colonies. It ought to be given at home, principally before they go to school, but partly during the long vacations which are now the rule. No doubt the boys will grumble at having to work in the holidays, which are all too short for the amount of listless

lounging, the busy idleness, which must be crammed into them. Still the wise parent will not let them pass away unimproved. A few walks and talks will draw out and satisfy the "honest curiosity" always to be encouraged in young people. No boy will object to learn how to distinguish a faint from a fit, how to tie up a wound or recover a person from drowning, how to put out a fire or sew on a button, knock in a nail, or make a salad. In short, the exigencies of a picnic or a journey may provide him with resources to be developed afterwards beside a bush-fire at the antipodes, in a shipwreck, under the guns of an enemy, or at a competitive examination. It can do him no harm to have a clear idea as to the relative positions of the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition, and to know the difference between a bluebell and a buttercup, a crocodile and an alligator, a barrister and a solicitor. It is also desirable that he should be able to come into a room without slouching, and to hand a lady a chair with politeness. He will find that the power to sing a simple tune at sight and join in a rational conversation will not take much from the pleasures of life, nor prevent his being able to catch a ball or a salmon. A few weeks will often suffice to teach a mere infant the notes of music and their places on the piano. It is amusing to watch the rays of delight which beam from the faces of the children at the Kindergartens when they are asked to sing something. Then, too, the use of a needle and thread is as easily learnt by a boy as a girl; he does not instinctively feel that there is anything ridiculous in the employment of sewing, and the accomplishment is sure to come in usefully in many ways. Every sailor knows something about it, and does not think himself a Miss Molly in consequence.

One of the best things a young man can be indulged in is a taste. It will save him from the *ennui*

which might drive him to gambling or undesirable company. Few boys with a real love for some science or art ever come to much harm. The intelligence developed in a child who collects specimens of stone or birds' nests, learns to cultivate a garden, or to carve a piece of wood, will make him a better man of business, or help him in a profession, as the case may be. A few hyacinth bulbs to nurse, a fern-case to water, some flowers to arrange, will give a feeling of home even to a dingy London lodging; but the love of flowers, like many other things, must be learnt in childhood. Tastes are not, as a rule, exorbitantly expensive; they are certainly very much cheaper than vices. A very moderate percentage of an income judiciously laid out will soon secure an excellent library. It is surprising how small a sum will suffice for the purchase of every standard work worth having. The most famous private libraries cost their owners nothing in comparison with the price of a few race-horses. Pictures judiciously selected are not an extravagance to those who can afford them. Any collection made with knowledge and love of the subject is almost sure to be worth at least what it cost. The time it occupied in collecting is in many instances rescued from being employed in idleness or frivolity.

### MOTHERS' SONS.

It is not a little difficult sometimes to listen with proper politeness and attention to a fond mother whose only idea of conversation consists in telling interminable and perfectly incomprehensible stories about her absent sons. The difficulty is much increased if we have a personal acquaintance with the young men, and know them to be more than usually commonplace. Happily, however, there is then some

chance of getting a little amusement out of the anecdotes; for it is often inexpressibly ludicrous to contrast a parent's opinion of her offspring with that formed by the outer world. Fortunately for society at large, these gushing and adoring mammas are seldom to be met with except in the depths of the country. "By a stream-side on the grass" we have leisure to listen while they dilate on the genius developed by their babes in the nursery. We can watch the flitting of the dragon-flies among the reeds as they detail their glowing anticipations of manly success to be earned in the future. It is impossible not to feel that no fairy tale could be more baseless; yet who would wish to destroy one single illusion? The infatuation of affection has always something poetic about it, something to be envied.

Sunday afternoon seems the time specially consecrated to recollections and talk of these absent darlings. The half-empty family pew no doubt brings back vivid pictures of the boys who used to fill the now vacant places. The scratches on the woodwork made by their little restless feet seem still fresh. The hymn-books have in them the names of those who may never more return to use them. Then, too, at that diabolical entertainment, the early dinner, the mother counts the blanks. When the hour comes at which all the children used to assemble round her knee, it is not surprising that she should unconsciously victimize any one who will allow her to talk freely of what is uppermost in her own mind. She shows the little gardens in which still bloom the double daisies so dear to children. She lingers by the side of the pond where her eldest born, a most disagreeable child, was unfortunately not drowned. She sits down under the trees in which the boys used to swing their hammocks in the holidays and makes room for her victim to sit beside her. It is wonderful how, by the help of

a cigar, it is possible to listen almost with interest to the details of Harry's wonderful skill in dealing with the Indian ryots—evidently a pure fiction—or of the account of Arthur's success as a missionary amongst savages who would pick his bones if they dared. The bees amongst the lime-trees make a delicious drowsy accompaniment to stories without any point and to hopes which can never be realized in this world. It is almost pleasant being bored just enough to feel meritorious in sacrificing time to a fellow-creature which might have been more agreeably spent on a French novel. It may be that the listener finds himself wishing for a magic glass resembling that possessed by this rather tiresome mother. The pleasure of life might be enhanced if he could see through its medium the people who, like her sons, now appear to him utterly uninteresting and even disagreeable.

But it is the young women coveted as daughters-in-law who know most about these talks. One of "the boys" is coming home on leave. A nice little girl, with several hundreds a year, is living in the neighbourhood. She is asked to stay. The best bedroom is made bright with flowers. The tent is put up on the lawn. The covers are taken off the drawing-room furniture, the garden-seats painted, the summer-house put in order. The mother takes possession of the young lady, and looks at her all day long with eyes of yearning and solicitude. They go long lonely drives in the pony-carriage; and, no matter what the subject started, it is sure to revert to the one important theme. The girl soon becomes intimately acquainted with all the stories which every one else has already heard too often. She begins to join in the hero-worship, even to conjure up pretty little day-dreams with reference to the fate for which she is evidently intended. A son so much adored must be a good son, and good sons are proverbially pattern husbands.

It cannot be impossible to love a man whose disposition seems by all accounts to be amiable to a fault. When the mother accompanies the petted visitor to her room at night, bringing with her bundles of precious letters, out of which she reads disconnected scraps, the girl is almost moved to tears for very sympathy. The well-worn commonplaces seem original and eloquent ; the bald descriptions of fine scenery as poetic as Wordsworth's *Excursion* ; the details about money matters become personally interesting. Then countless photographs, of every shade and shape, are produced, with a clear explanation that they are not in the least like the original. This is a relief, when they prove for the most part to be decidedly ugly and the reverse of prepossessing ; but every one knows that photography cannot do justice to fair people, and the young man is described as exquisitely fair. The two women sit crooning together until they are startled by hearing the clock strike something very small. They retire to rest to dream of new and closer ties in the future. At last the joyful day arrives when a telegram from Southampton fixes the train by which the gallant hero is to be expected. The mother, before she goes to meet it, insists upon having a voice in the dressing of her daughter-in-law to be, and in the arrangement of her hair. She looks at her choice with proud satisfaction, well pleased with the result. There is an effusive kiss and a whispered blessing. But her return is not so triumphant, although a small freckled man with white eyebrows and a squint is sitting beside her. The beloved son has just confided to his parent that he is engaged to be married to the Colonel's governess who came home with him in the ship, and that he hopes his mother will invite her at once and welcome her as a daughter.

From rural parsonages and old manor-houses miles away from the sound of a railway whistle come many

of our naval and military officers, our City clerks, and Australian settlers. Their sisters, if they do not marry, remain at home, bound to an uneventful round of home duties and monotonous occupations. They have no share in the battle of life. Their service consists in waiting for the husbands who do not arrive, in trying to sleep a beauty sleep until the prince comes with his awakening kiss. They do their best to extract excitement from the letters with foreign postmarks. They make it a duty to reply to them at great length. But to the mother these letters are the landmarks of life. Her heart is altogether bound up in her far-away sons. With them she really lives, and not with the quiet daughters who are ready to fulfil her every wish. The most uninteresting epistle from one of the boys is read over and over again. The more illegible the writing the longer is the pleasure it can give. A thousand conjectures may be formed upon one badly-written word, and every one who calls can be consulted and asked to help in trying to decipher it. The sentence is examined with a microscope, and then pinned on the wall to be surveyed in a general view. It is probably misread after all, because it is misspelt. The right interpretation cannot be obtained under several months, during which time the puzzle furnishes an endless subject of conversation and controversy. The expressions of affection, or hints at home-sickness, are learnt by heart and treasured up to be thought over in the night watches. The trivial anecdotes are told and retold to all comers. Many are the talks with old nurse, who, like her mistress, is never weary of discussing the most trivial particulars. Copies of the letters are made and sent the round of the relations and god-parents, who as a rule put them in the fire unread. And then what long answers are written on the thinnest of paper! All home news becomes of importance if it is likely to interest those



who are far away. The mother makes a point of keeping her sons well up in the gossip of the neighbourhood, so that, when the much-desired leave is obtained, they may return with their minds perfectly clear with regard to who is married and who dead, who is engaged and who has been jilted. The new curate acquires additional interest from being photographically described. The account of the last Meet is told with vicarious enthusiasm. Apparently the morning paper is almost as eagerly seized as the letters; but the mother, perhaps in a weak moment, confesses that she takes no interest in politics, and never looks at a leading article. It is to the paragraph containing the list of mails arrived and expected that she unhesitatingly turns. She then begins to make abstruse calculations as to whether she can answer her letters by Marseilles, and so save a post. She looks up the journal kept to remind her what to say, and forgets to order dinner on the day the mail goes out. She is a happy woman, for her geese are all swans; and if she is ultimately compelled to acknowledge that her sons have made no great figure in the world, she comforts herself by reserving for them in a more appreciative sphere the position denied to Zebedee's children.

## THE TYRANNY OF MOTHERS.

We have heard enough, and perhaps more than enough, of the social despotism which is exercised by the Belgravian mother. No doubt a good deal of tyranny goes on in fashionable circles. It is hard to believe that every girl one sees going backwards round and round the squirrel cage in the Park can really enjoy it. It is not likely that all the young women at

a fashionable crush are enduring heat, fatigue, and dulness, entirely of their own free will. It is impossible that a girl can wish to make friends only in a rank above her own. There must be children of frivolous mothers who, after their first "season" in London, would prefer to remain in the country during the loveliest months of the year; who would choose a ride on the breezy downs rather than to be broiled in Rotten Row, and enjoy their own fragrant pleasure-ground more than a dusty *fête* at the Botanic Gardens. There must be others who, if they did come to town, would like to cultivate some taste or talent which they possess, instead of frittering away their time between *matinées*, shopping, drives, afternoon teas, and dinners at which they are obliged to appear, in order to show that they have been invited. The truth is that the despotism of the Belgravian matron is only a part, and in itself perhaps the smallest part, of a system which is pressing painfully upon a large class of English women, a system for which we can find no other name than that of the Tyranny of Mothers. The old relations of father and son have utterly changed within living memory. It is not that there is less affection or less reverence in the boys of a family, but there is a great deal less of the formal obedience which used to be expected from them. A wise father nowadays sees that he must leave his sons a good deal to themselves, that their thoughts are not likely to be his thoughts, nor their ways his ways. He is content if he finds that this growing independence leaves the deeper ties of love and tenderness untouched. But no change of this sort can be detected as yet in the relations between daughters and mothers. The old traditions of rigorous dependence are carefully preserved. No matter what the age of her daughters may be, an English mother still calls them "the girls." She transplants the discipline of

the nursery to the croquet-ground and the ball-room. She expects them to repeat the conversations they have with their partners. She insists on reading the letters they receive, and dictates the answers they send. She assumes complete control over their time, reading, opinions, religion, and friendships. The social liberty accorded to young and unmarried women in America horrifies the orthodox British mother. Here we can in some degree sympathise with her ; her mistake is that, in flying from one objectionable extreme, she rushes into another and a worse. She is shocked at the idea of a girl being able to take care of herself. French fashions with respect to the position of unmarried daughters are much more to her taste. She does not approve of tight lacing and high heels, but cannot help admiring a young woman who would not dream of having an opinion of her own until she had a husband to whom to confide it. She forgets that French girls do not generally leave their convents until their parents have commenced matrimonial negotiations with the view of settling them in life, and that, if these plans break down, they return to their convent again. An English girl is left to draw for the matrimonial prize as she can, and is thence, if she fails, in a world which her whole system of training leaves her unfitted to face.

But it is not with the larger issues of this question that we wish to deal at present. What has hardly been noticed is the helpless way in which the present system leaves girls at the mercy of the most foolish of parents. Of course there are plenty of sensible mothers, and if all mothers were sensible, it would matter very little what precise terms of dependence they might require from their daughters. But unluckily all mothers are not sensible. There are frivolous mothers, and bigoted mothers, and fussy mothers, and timid mothers, and coddling mothers,

and stupid mothers. But whether a mother be stupid, or coddling, or timid, or fussy, or frivolous, the girls are absolutely at her mercy. It is hard to make a choice between the despotism of the one or the other ; but perhaps the greatest trial to young creatures full of life and energy is the tyranny of the timid mother. She will not allow her girls to skate because Sir John Franklin was lost among icebergs ; nor to ride because fox-hunters sometimes get their necks broken ; nor to row because young men injure themselves in those dreadful boat-races. They may not have a pet dog in case it should go mad, nor any monkshood in their gardens for fear they should poison themselves. The timid mother forbids her daughters to visit among the poor, as they might take smallpox, and will not allow one of them to go alone outside the avenue gate from her dread of garotters. The description which she gives of the neighbouring fields is appalling. She represents them to be the lairs of mad bulls, savage tramps, venomous snakes, and wild horses. Her girls cannot propose either work or play which she does not prove to be encompassed with dangers horrible and hitherto unthought of. In their childish days they were not allowed a rocking-horse for fear it should overbalance, nor a swing in case the rope might break, nor a pocket-knife lest they should cut their fingers.

The coddling mother is very nearly allied to the timid one. She is always tying comforters round her children's throats, and applying flannel to mysterious places where it will not stay. She revels in chest-protectors and respirators, and her room is adorned with sticking-plaster and gallipots. She is always intent on proving that every one either has a cold or is taking one ; and she may be seen at night in a flannel dressing-gown, going from room to room with gruel, pills, mustard leaves, and India-rubber hot water-bottles.

She is constantly discovering obscure signs of some deadly disease in her children. She takes for granted that all her daughters have weak spines, so their beds are destitute of pillows, and there is a reclining board in every room. When the coddling mother takes her girls to a picnic she will not allow them to sit on the grass, nor in the sun, nor under a tree, nor on a rock. They must return with her before the dew begins to rise, and are never allowed to look at the moon except through a window. They are taught to be always analysing their sensations, and lose half the pleasures of everyday life. They may not exult in a brave south-wester, get wet in a summer shower, or walk ankle deep in the glittering snow-wreaths. Human nature shrinks from prying further if the coddling mother is also a homœopathist. Vivisection is nothing to the tortures she will inflict as she sits down with Laurie's *Domestic Medicine* in her hand, to ask questions in order to diagnose the case. The patient soon feels as though every organ in her body was such a mass of disease that even bryonia and aconite, time about every five minutes, will fail to cure it.

The greatest of all tyrants, however, is the pious mother. It is difficult to say what particular injunctions or prohibitions she may deduce from the mysterious Old Testament texts which she is so fond of quoting. She somehow discovers that whist is played with the visiting-cards of the Evil One, and will not allow a backgammon-box in the house because throwing dice is tempting Providence. She shakes her head at the mere mention of dancing, being reminded of a sad event brought about by that wicked amusement, and would scarcely have a powder-puff for the baby because of the horrible fate of a late Queen of Samaria. No mistletoe is allowed in the house because it is a relic of heathen customs. On Valentine's day she waits at the door for the postman, and

will not part with any of the letters addressed to either her daughters or her servants until she has seen that they do not contain any frivolous verses or mythological pictures. An enterprising lover has been known to take her in by sending a sanctimonious hymn to the object of his affections ; but the fair one, discovering a little bit of satin ribbon, pulls it, and out jumps merry Cupid with an amatory address in his hand. The pious mother will not allow her daughters any books but those she has herself read and approved. Her attention is so much taken up with preparations for another sphere of existence, that she has little time for this world and its literary fripperies. They may read parts of the *Record* and a few books on science, if written by a clergyman and published by the Tract Society. The usual result of such tyranny is that the girls borrow the *London Journal* from the housemaid, and third-rate novels from the village lending library. The cook, who manages this latter transaction, probably chooses the books.

The superior mother is a relief after the pious mother. She certainly does start most extraordinary theories, but she reads and thinks. One may find her children standing in a row, exercising their left legs like ballet-dancers, and their left arms like popular preachers. They are only trying to awaken the right lobe of their brains, on the principle that two heads are better than one. We cannot help being carried away with the idea and join them in this intellectual exercise. Have the Shakers tried these experiments ? The superior mother has wondrous plans of education, and is always detailing how successful they are. Some of her children are taught to spell phonetically, so that their spelling is ever afterwards a doubtful quantity. Others are only taught shorthand, and to do all their sums by algebra. She is a Spiritualist, a Positivist, and a Pantheist, by turns, and perhaps she takes to



chiromancy and casting horoscopes. Through all her vagaries her children must follow her, and change their opinions as often as she does. Who can wonder if their beliefs are few?

It is hardly worth while perhaps to go on with the list of mothers whose silliness or ignorance makes their tyranny as galling as it is no doubt well-intentioned. The fault is far less in such mothers themselves than in the system which makes their defects bear so hardly on their girls. The most terrible result of such a system is seen, not in the temporary suffering or annoyance it causes, but in the social helplessness to which it dooms thousands of Englishwomen. The relations of daughters to their mothers, as those relations are practically worked out in domestic life, prevent a girl from ever fitting herself by education for earning her own livelihood. Thousands of girls have no prospect in life but that of marriage, self-support, or starvation. When a professional man, for instance, has brought up his girls in luxury, provided them with amusements, and taken them into good society, he thinks he has fulfilled his duty. Why don't they marry? At his death they have to shift for themselves as they best may, weighted by the terrible disadvantages of idle habits and a defective education. There is no reason why girls should not be helped to a profession in the same way that their brothers are helped. If their parents cannot provide for them, they are bound to leave them self-supporting. There will soon be an almost unlimited demand for competent teachers in our middle-class schools. There is great need of ladies as matrons of workhouses and other public institutions. There is probably an opening for lady medical assistants. There is no reason why girls should not learn to tune pianos and paint coats of arms on carriages. But, whatever is their calling, they must be educated to it.



If children have duties, they have also rights. They must not be expected to earn their own livelihood when they have never been taught a trade; and mothers must learn that training of this sort cannot be carried on by their daughters without a considerable relaxation of the bondage in which they live at present, and that a character which fits a woman to face the world cannot be formed under the domestic pressure to which girls' tempers are now subjected. All that is needed is that some of the independence which is granted to the boys of a family should be granted to their sisters. They must be left more to themselves. A lady whose children had turned out remarkably well was asked what system of education she had pursued. She answered, "As soon as my babies were able to hold by a chair, I showed them I expected they would take good care of themselves. I never 'ran to help them when they fell,' but let them pick themselves up. If they were hurt I did not 'kiss the place to make it well,' but tried to make them laugh at their bumps. I gave them pocket-money as soon as they could speak plain. They learnt the value of money by the time they were grown up. I let them read any books or newspapers that came into the house, and talk to me about them. I allowed them to sit alone if they liked. I gave the girls uninterrupted time for study. They chose their own friends. I have always found them defer to my wishes in the smallest particular. They are helpful, affectionate, confiding, and grateful." Can the tyrannical mothers who weakly indulge and as weakly repress their children say so much?

## SINGLE BLESSEDNESS.

Few persons who have not some special experience can believe how dull society has become in rural districts. They can hardly realize the stagnation which pervades regions far away from any great commercial centre or military depôt. The county magnates, if there are any near, do not add much to the summer and autumn gaieties. They, poor people, are only too glad of a little rest after the fatigues of the season and the session. When they want society they bring it from afar. They make up a party in the house, and have no need of the company of their smaller country neighbours. But to people who live nearly all the year round in one place, it is a standing puzzle how they may gratify their hospitable inclinations when they have no good shooting to offer as a bait. They are willing to give any number of parties for the sake of the young folk, but the only element necessary for the success of such gatherings is what they cannot provide. There are no young men to be had. Perhaps in the whole neighbourhood there are only two resident gentlemen unmarried, and they probably prefer turnip-fields and partridges to young ladies and lawn tennis. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that a garden-party is not always the brilliant entertainment that might at first sight be imagined. The dowagers enjoy themselves fairly well, except when they share the anxieties of their daughters. They sit in rows on the terrace and drink tea; they spread mild country gossip, wonder who will get the rich college living just vacant, and hope it will be a bachelor not too old. They discuss the flower-beds and the arrangement of the colours. They are

delighted with a gaudy ribbon border into which has been introduced a coat of arms in scarlet geraniums and beetroot. They agree that we have at last arrived at high mediæval art in gardening. One of them says she is going to have a bed made to represent a tortoise-shell cat with her kittens round her. They agree that that will be beautiful, and "so new." They talk together warmly of their absent sons, who, far away in India or the colonies, are serving the Queen, or making themselves new homes in new countries. How valuable one or two of them would be here! How the hostess would welcome them! Sometimes one comes home and flutters the dovecot. Perhaps he seeks to take a lamb from the fold, or more likely he has already met his fate elsewhere, and looks with only a brother's admiration at the young ladies he remembers as little girls.

The old gentlemen of the party are at a premium. No matter how short of breath or how stout of limb they may be, they gallantly endeavour to supply the place of the young adorers who are needed but absent. They hand thin bread and butter, and trip over croquet hoops at the peril of their lives. They pay old-fashioned compliments, and love to call up a mild virginal blush. There are numbers of nice girls on the lawn. They have a sweet country flavour and an air of amiability denied to their town sisters, and quite enchanting. They dress themselves elaborately from patterns which they find in the *Queen*, and put touching bouquets of heliotrope and wild roses in their hats. They wear the palest of gloves and the neatest of boots, and have learnt how to use a fan like a Spaniard. They put on horribly discordant colours sometimes, but their pretty fresh bloom kills all the discordance, and we forgive them. They know how to play croquet so as to display their feet to the best advantage. They can pose their lithe healthy figures so

as to look both active and graceful when playing lawn tennis. They persuade themselves that they enjoy garden-parties immensely, and never think of such a thing as a lover. They eat strawberries and cream, or syllabub, and endeavour to find a fascination in champagne cup. They talk about the beauty of the day and the loveliness of the view. They go in pairs and tell each other secrets. They gather in groups, and try to get very much interested about what books are to be ordered for the Reading Society. The baby is brought down and covered with caresses; they flutter round him fondly and kiss his little dumpy fists. The Skye terrier stands with suppliant gestures, and they pretend to be deeply interested when he balances a piece of sugar on his nose. They look at the fish in the pond, and experiment upon the different jets of the fountain. One girl may walk round the shrubbery with a curate, but he is married and the father of numberless children. Talk with him implies ghostly comfort, or at the least, cottage lectures, flannel, and the church choir. Now and then a married man of more than ordinary courage breaks through routine, and carries off a couple of girls to a quiet seat, whence gay laughter is subsequently heard. But the mother looks suspicious, and does not like such conduct. Suppose this amusing but practically useless man should on a future occasion monopolize her girls when, long expected, the eligible at last appears. On the whole, gaieties do not flourish when there are no possible flirtations. The parties are much like what the Durbar in India would have been without the presence of the Prince of Wales. Any entertainment, however elaborate, must fall flat where there are no unmarried young men to be attracted by the pretty ways, the bright eyes, the graceful figures, the innocent prattle of the marriageable maidens.

Perhaps, however, the one beau of the neighbourhood is caught for the occasion. If he is a gentleman, we pity him. It is with feelings of despair rather than of exultation that he finds himself the most important person present. For a modest and well-meaning young man there can be few positions more embarrassing than that of the eligible bachelor in a country neighbourhood. If he is possessed of good looks and pleasing manners, and is besides rich and well born, his case is serious. If, for some reason, he is obliged to live principally at home, his condition is worthy of the deepest commiseration. He is probably as hard worked as the Heir-Apparent, and he would require the diplomacy of an Italian ambassador to steer clear of giving offence. He is not at all enamoured of his position, and feels humiliated rather than complimented when the thought crosses his mind that the doctor's five daughters are all affected by the colour of his tie, and know to a nicety the shade of his gloves. He would rather they would not take so much interest in the way he divides his hair, and is heartily sorry they have not each half-a-dozen devoted lovers. He wishes they could experience the pleasure of refusing a proposal once a week or accepting two or three if they liked that better. It is not his fault that there are nine hundred thousand more women than men in the United Kingdom, or that the sexes seem to have changed positions, and that those who were formerly the seekers are now the sought. He does not see why young women are to be sneered at because at a party they like to find young men willing to pay them attention. Nor does he find anything unnatural in the fact that, when girls go to a ball, they prefer not to be obliged either to dance with each other or to sit still all the evening. He almost wishes the days of Sir Charles Grandison would return, when a lady found it difficult to protect herself from her

numberless adorers. But he is helpless. What is one amongst so many? The young ladies are so sweet that he does not know which is sweetest ; so plentiful that they are overpowering ; so willing to change their condition that he is bewildered. Polygamy is against the law ; besides he does not even want to marry one. He would take a tour round the world if he could, but, as circumstances oblige him to stay at home, he has to resign himself to play his part and to appear on all occasions as "best man." The families for miles round ask him to dinner on the slightest pretext, and are offended if he does not accept every invitation. The two old maiden ladies who live in the village, but whose father was a baronet, invite him to tea when their niece comes to stay with them. They hope nothing less than that he will fall violently in love with her over the muffins and village-made cake. The clergymen for miles round expect him to come to their harvest homes, and be the admirer of five-and-twenty young ladies at least. No penny readings are worth anything unless he can put in an appearance. The young ladies persuade him to help to decorate the church at Christmas, and blush and smile when he hammers their fingers instead of the nails as he hangs up the wreaths. No christening is complete without him, and of course at weddings he is indispensable.

But if this country eligible is always a welcome visitor, and loved "not wisely, but too well," this does not save him from much adverse criticism and much ill-natured detraction. If of a genial temperament, he will find it impossible not to be called a flirt. He may be scrupulously equal in his attentions to all the young ladies he meets, but an involuntary sigh, the present of a flower, a necessary civility, or a thoughtless expression, will earn him the character of a gay deceiver. The safest course is to earn it thoroughly by telling every girl in the neighbourhood that she is



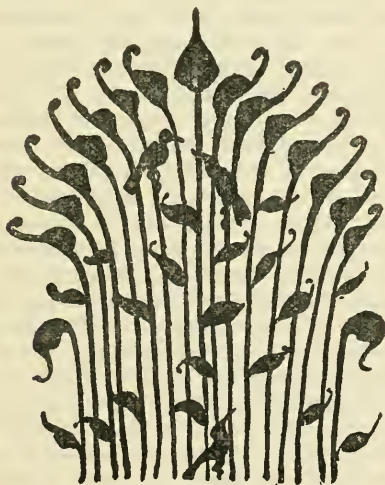
the only person he ever really loved, and by sending the same valentine to each fair one. But if he is reserved, and fights shy of young ladies, if he is stiff, and tries not to give them false hopes, he is called a misanthrope, or is supposed to be secretly married. Whatever he does will be wrong; nevertheless he will be asked and expected to go everywhere, and to marry some one. At last perhaps he brings home a bride from a distant county, plain, and without any fortune. Her position is not to be envied until it is forgotten how great was once the importance of her husband among the neighbours who scarcely now care to call.

Sometimes it is one's misfortune to see a man who is not a gentleman under the circumstances we have described. Instead of being embarrassed by his position, he glories in it. He yawns ostentatiously at garden-parties to show how bored he is. He boasts of the attentions he receives, but says he is not a marrying man, and that they are therefore thrown away upon him. He sneers at old maids, and talks disparagingly of all women. He probably flirts outrageously with some married lady and laughs at her behind her back. If by chance he is attracted by a pretty girl some day, and she will not receive his attentions, but, when he rushes to the hall-door to put her into her carriage, pretends not to see him and leaves him looking foolish on the steps, everybody is glad to see him snubbed. Though he is asked everywhere, he is detested and despised.

It is curious that so few mothers, recognising the difficulty of finding husbands for their daughters, do not bring them up with views beyond marriage, and give them at least a chance of some other calling if matrimony should fail them. All their lives are now too often staked on one die, and marriage is treated as the only alternative to social failure. While the present scarcity of husbands lasts, it might be worth while to



try an experiment which, without unfitting girls to be good wives, would make them better and happier old maids. A man does not make a bad husband because he has a profession. A woman who knew that in remaining single she did not leave herself without interest and occupation would both double her chances of marriage and be able to judge calmly of an offer when it comes.



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## DRESSMAKING AS A FINE ART.

WITHIN the last few years there has been a great revival in many minor branches of decorative art. The School of Needlework at South Kensington is rich in designs for costly and beautiful hangings. There are a large number of efficient workers employed there, and a little of the embroidery produced by the ladies is extremely good. In many shop-windows are to be seen fine plaques of china and admirable tiles, while even the convicts at Woking turn out very creditable mosaic. Wall papers have reached the point of being really decorative, and the most fastidious person can hardly fail to find something to please him amongst the many patterns brought out by competent people who have studied the subject. It is now possible to get both men and women so well educated in art and archæology that they are able to design appropriate furniture to suit any given style of architecture. It is surely time to try art dressmaking. So long as we were contented to follow French fashions with regard to the furnishing of our houses it was perhaps natural that our wives and daughters should get their dresses from Paris. Now that we have ceased to look across the Channel for the patterns of our carpets and our clocks, there is no reason why dress should not also be provided at home in harmony with other decorations.

When we walk into a drawing-room furnished in severe "Queen Anne," and find the lady of the

house sitting in an upright chair, sipping her tea out of a Bristol cup and saucer, but dressed in the extreme of the present fashion, our æsthetic teeth are set on edge. Everything seems out of tune and inharmonious. It is as if we opened a Venetian casket and found that it contained a photograph of the Albert Memorial. Ladies with delicate perception and sufficient skill to know how to furnish their rooms feel this incongruity instinctively. They often express a wish that they could order their dresses from the same artist who paints their rooms; but as that is impossible, they go to Mr. Worth instead, and try to conform their taste to the last new Paris whim, no matter how ugly or indecorous it may be. The fashions which have been worn for the last six or seven years are certainly much more picturesque than those of the days of crinoline. More care has been taken by the milliners that colours shall be few and harmonious. The wearing of black even by those not in mourning has been very generally adopted, and, as it suits almost every one, and looks well out of doors, it is at least unobjectionable. Still there is an immense amount of bad dressing to be seen everywhere which is quite needless, and which would be simply impossible if the art was at all understood by either dressmakers or dress wearers.

Dressmakers, as a class, are vulgar and uneducated, with little appreciation of the artistic subtleties of their art, or even its more obvious proprieties. They have learnt to load their work with ugly and senseless frills which do not end anything, with bows which do not tie anything, and with buttons which are of no use, until their eyes are incapable of seeing, or their minds of understanding, the grace of simplicity and the charm of suitability. Of what constitutes true beauty in the female form they are entirely ignorant, and they adore a waist that can be spanned. They

think that a dress is a perfect fit in which a lady can neither raise her arms nor use her legs. Artificial flowers and glass beads are their highest ideal of decoration, and costly trimmings of art. A novelty, however ugly, if stamped with the approval of Paris, is accepted without a thought, but the suggestion of some pretty design which has not emanated from that centre of frivolity is at once rejected with scorn because it has no "style." It is not uncommon to see vigorous efforts made on the part of some ladies to emancipate themselves from the thralldom of fashion and to strike out a line for themselves. Too often these efforts are signal failures from want of sufficient knowledge of the subject. There are very few people who have a genius for dressing themselves or even the perception to know what style suits them best. Ignorant attempts at the picturesque are often much worse than even a servile imitation of the reigning fashion. A good design is spoilt when badly carried out, or when the workmanship is not highly finished. Laces of different periods and countries are often ignorantly mixed up together, and sleeves of one century worn with bodices of another. It is unpleasant to see a Stuart costume surmounted by a Victorian chignon or an Elizabethan head-dress finished with a mob cap. Some ladies, too, will appear in a mediæval dress one day and in a Pompadour robe the next, giving one the impression that they are using up their fancy-ball costumes. Every woman has a certain style of appearance, and her dress should correspond with it. In French fashions there is generally a great want of dignity—the dignity of simplicity. How refreshing it is to see a handsome young woman in a plain gown looking, as George Eliot describes Dorothea Brooke, like a "fine quotation from the Bible in to-day's newspaper!"

Some time ago a "Country Critic" expressed in

the pages of the *Cornhill Magazine* his bewilderment after having made a tour through the studios of a certain class of painters. His politeness and old-fashioned courtesy probably prevented him from remarking upon what no doubt also struck him with astonishment—the withered appearance of the dresses of the ladies who belong to the set of whom he speaks. They too say, “Give us roses, but let them be faded ones.” They sometimes unfortunately go further and say, “Let them be soiled ones.” To a country gentleman accustomed to see his womenfolk in fresh muslins and clean prints it is not a little surprising to be taken to the homes of some of the literary and semi-artistic families living in and near London. An atmosphere of mouldy decay pervades the house, which is painted in dark-green blues. The walls are hung with every conceivable absurdity—sconces where no candles are ever lighted, gongs which are not to sound, curtains which have no purpose and give the air of an old-clothes shop. Whole dinner services of china are strung on the staircase, and everything is covered thick with a black oily dust made by smoke, smuts, and fog. Perhaps one of the sons of the house has taken to painting as a profession, and brings his studio friends home with him. His sisters hear a constant jargon about the beauty of “tone,” which they gradually discover to consist in old age with a judicious addition of dirt. They see their brother and his friends go into ecstasies over pieces of stuff which they pick out of the rubbish of a neighbouring pawnbroker. Consequently, the poor girls try to dress in a way which they fondly believe to be artistic, and end in looking like rag dolls. They tie the refuse of Cairo round their waists, and whips of strange fabrics round their necks. Peacock’s feathers eye us from unaccountable situations, and frills of old lace, so

dirty as to be almost nasty, garnish throats which would look much better in clean linen collars. But clean linen collars and cuffs have unfortunately no tone ; they are incompatible with artistic dressing. Then, too, tidy hair is inadmissible. It should give the impression that it is subject to being torn whenever its owner is carried away by the tumult of feeling produced by a passionate poem of Rossetti's or the tragic ending of a three-volume novel. It must never be fastened up securely, but must be ready to fall down at the slightest provocation. It must be free to the four winds of heaven, and look like well-tossed hay.

There is another style of artistic dressing which, when badly done, is almost as offensive as the withered style. We may call it, for want of a better name, Free Classic. It is generally adopted by short fat people with high shoulders. It consists for the most part of a shapeless cream-coloured cotton or woollen robe, with a gold girdle. On stout figures the effect is by no means attractive. A model attired in a night-gown which has been properly damped and draped no doubt looks very well, but a night-gown over a reasonable amount of under-garments is merely ungainly and shapeless. Dresses of this pattern must be either ugly or indelicate. Still, freedom to live as we like and dress as we like is such a desirable thing that we may rejoice to think a lady can go to a dinner-party in a white flannel dressing-gown without any doubts being raised as to her sanity. Indeed, we must be glad of every nail that can be put in Mrs. Grundy's coffin. It is opening up a way for the varieties of individuality which she so sternly represses in any one under the rank of a countess. The sort of dressing, however, we have been speaking of unhappily often only retards freedom. It bears the same relationship to really

artistic costume that the tawdry imitations of litter-shops in back streets bear to first-rate French fashions. Good artistic and good fashionable dressing both involve expense, and neither of them can be well carried out without thought, knowledge, and money. We are very unfortunate in having no national costume. It would save us from much that is unbearably hideous in the dress of the lower orders, and perhaps enable them to have clean, serviceable clothing, instead of trumpery second-hand finery. If our middle-class young ladies are to do cooking and housemaid's work they, too, should have a picturesque costume. Perhaps the authorities at South Kensington might spend some of their spare time in designing suitable combinations of short, bright petticoats, and overskirts to be drawn through a hanging girdle or the old-fashioned pocket-holes of our great-grandmothers.

Women should either adopt a uniform as men have done, or else dressmaking should be elevated into the position of a fine art, and treated as such. It should be undertaken by people of culture and refinement in the same way that cookery has been. There ought to be a school of art dressmaking. Perhaps a Royal Princess would patronize it. Certainly, portrait-painters would be only too glad to know of a place at which their sitters could be becomingly got up. It is melancholy to see the bad millinery which is being perpetuated in pictures, and which will be an eyesore to future generations. The walls of the Royal Academy and the Salon are every year hung with portraits which look like enlarged copies from *Le Follet* or the *Queen* newspaper. Ladies can never see ugliness in a dress so long as it is made in the height of the reigning fashion. They have their portraits taken, if possible, in "the last new thing," and then, when another style appears, wonder they could ever have made such frights of themselves. If



there were some recognised rules about dressing, as there are about almost every other kind of decoration, in time they would be followed, to the great relief of people of taste, and to the comfort of people with no taste at all. There are always a large number of ladies who say they have got no work to do. Here is an opening for them. Their first step ought to be to petition Her Majesty not to insist upon ladies who are delicate or spare in figure wearing low dresses at morning drawing-rooms. Their second one ought to be to abolish the use of the word "fashionable" in its present sense, and to substitute for it the word "becoming," which would indicate both economy where it is necessary and magnificence where it is suitable.

## WORK FOR WOMEN.

There is no need any longer to argue the question whether or not women whose social position is that of gentlewomen shall be allowed freely to enter the labour market. Necessity has taken the matter beyond the reach of controversy. Thousands of ladies are to be found without any male relations who can support them. They have to choose between starvation, dependence upon charity, and honourable work. Surely the last is not so very much to be dreaded. Charity is too often accepted as if it were the rightful reward of laziness and incompetence. Too often it is given on those terms. There are several reasons why the number of women who ought to make money is daily increasing. The same income which enabled a middle-class family to live in comfort twenty years ago will not do so now. This is partly because of the rise in prices, but chiefly because many things which used to come under the head of the luxuries of life have now

become its necessities. Professional men, except those in the first rank, can generally do little more than make ends meet. They cannot lay by fortunes for their daughters, or pay very heavy insurance premiums. Then, too, business has assumed a more speculative character, so that the merchant, rich to-day, may be ruined to-morrow, and his luxuriously brought-up children find themselves left penniless. Young men do not marry so early as they did fifty years ago. A greater number of them seek their fortune away from home, whilst few single women above the rank of servants emigrate. All these causes combined leave many thousands of women who are known as ladies in a position which obliges them to become self-supporting. There is plenty of room for them all if they will consent to give a good day's work for a good day's wages, but not otherwise. They must take the same position as men in the labour market, and be able to offer market value in the shape of skilled work before they ask to be paid for it. There is, however, a growing and most encouraging desire amongst young girls to be taught to earn their own livelihood. They begin to understand that there is no degradation in being paid for work, provided the work done is worth the money, but that there is degradation in being dependent on relations or friends, and that the life of busy idleness which most girls lead is simply beneath contempt. Some ambitions besides those of being fashionably dressed or getting a pair of new earrings are arising in their breasts. Those who have no home duties want their share in the world's work and in the prosperity which they see earned by hard-working men. Even in a family where the parent's income is sufficient to provide necessary things for the children, the girls may like to be able to earn some pocket-money. The love of art and of pretty things which is becoming so

universal makes them wish for a picture to hang in their own room, or perhaps a pair of new curtains or a cover for their writing-table. They want an expensive book on some special subject or a rare plant for their flower-garden. They feel that they cannot ask their parents for these unnecessary things, and long to earn money to buy them. Every girl might be so brought up as to acquire sufficient proficiency in some one thing to be able to make money by it. There are other cases where the power of adding a little to a small income would enable two young people to marry instead of being engaged for years.

When women suddenly find themselves obliged to do something for a livelihood, the difficulty of course arises as to what they can do. The first thing that naturally occurs to them is to turn governesses or companions. They are told at all the agencies that the market is overstocked. This is only true in a sense. The market is undoubtedly overstocked with people who think teaching is a sort of thing which comes by nature, but who in fact know nothing whatever about it, as they have had no proper training, and probably have not mastered one single subject sufficiently well to teach it intelligibly. But there are more applications for certificated governesses than all the agencies can possibly meet. The School Boards do not know where to turn for competent female teachers. The new education code already demands something like fifteen thousand schoolmistresses. Women have only begun to learn that there is no market for unskilled labour, so they are not ready to fill these vacancies. In needlework, again, an employment which naturally belongs to the weaker sex, the same want of proper training as in every other branch of ladies' work will be found to exist. It is becoming every day more rare to find a girl who can darn and mend neatly, who

can cut out and cleverly fit chintz covers for furniture, who can rearrange the breadths of a carpet and mend it so as to escape detection. Not long ago a lady much interested in the subject of employment for poor ladies was allowed to give an order for a large and costly trousseau. She bought patterns of embroidered under-clothing in Paris, and took them to one of the London Societies for the sale of poor ladies' work. The manager rather ruefully explained to her that she had only one person on her books who could execute satin-stitch embroidery similar to the patterns, and only a very few who could make up the garments after they were embroidered. Some simpler articles were taken to another establishment, but with a similar result, so the end was that nearly all the trousseau, which these Work Societies might have had, was procured from the shops in the usual way. The head of another of these establishments said a few days ago that she had only three good plain sewers amongst her numerous applicants for employment. Dressmaking too does not seem to have been tried by ladies with any signal success. This is strange, as enormous fortunes are made by fashionable milliners. Mrs. Crawshay boasts that her late "lady" maid, who has left her to become a companion, could make dresses which were mistaken for those of Messrs. Marshall and Snelgrove. Now this is precisely the sort of dressmaking from which we might have hoped ladies would save us. Dresses made in imitation of some ungraceful, inconvenient, third-rate French fashion can be bought by the hundred at all shops for ready-made articles. What ladies of taste profess that they look for, and never can find, are designers who at a moderate cost will make up materials into simple, individual, and suitable costumes, or who could with intelligence carry out a design from a drawing or picture. At present it is necessary to go

either to a tailor or to a ruinously expensive Court milliner to have a plain dress really well fitted. The most advanced representatives of "Woman's Rights" do not have their riding-habits made by one of their own sex, nor their jackets if they can help it. Women are brought up with such habits of inexactness that they cannot be trusted where eighths of an inch make any difference. There is nothing of which mothers complain so bitterly as the impossibility of getting simple well-cut dresses for their children, except from two or three shops where the price, as compared with the cost of the material, is so disproportionate as to be only possible to people to whom a few pounds more or less makes no difference. The only place where elegantly made prints for ladies' morning wear are to be had is a French establishment. They are imported from Paris, and cost as much as a rich silk. Surely this is absurd whilst there are so many ladies who say they want work. An appeal has been made for funds to establish a school for young ladies who wish to learn scientifically, but the school has not yet been started.

Nursing has long been talked of as a sphere of women's work. The profession has not been at all developed in the way it might have been. It has infinite ramifications and new fields still to be conquered. Middle-aged ladies might go out as monthly nurses, for which six months of proper training would fit them. Many ladies would prefer an attendant who could be an intellectual companion as well as a nurse. Dispensing medicine seems to have been tried with success, and there is no reason why women should not make good chemists. The Government Telegraph Offices and the Post Office clerkships supply a good deal of work, but it is most suitable to the same class of young girls who would otherwise go behind the counter. In America women are found very useful in

banks, as they are invaluable detectors of forged notes; their sense of touch and sight seeming to be keener than that of the young men clerks. They have also been employed as Treasury clerks ever since the war. The profession of house-decorating seems one likely to develop itself, and is apparently very well suited to ladies of taste and education. Here, however, an apprenticeship of several years is required, as a knowledge of architecture and drawing to scale is absolutely indispensable. Good health, business faculties, and energy would be necessary to ensure success. With this occupation might be combined art needlework and glass-painting. China-painting, too, comes under this head, as tiles and plaques are now so much used in house decoration. Of literature, the general refuge for the distressed, we need scarcely here speak, except to say that it might be made a remunerative profession even by women without the talent of a George Eliot, did they but learn to write their own language correctly, or were they willing to work up a subject in the way that an antiquary or historian is compelled to do. Nor is it necessary to speak of painting, wood-engraving, photography, printing, music-teaching, or the other employments which are being resorted to with fair measures of success; but a few modes of employment whose suitability has still to be tested by experiment are suggested in *The Year-Book of Woman's Work* which has been lately compiled by Miss Hubbard. Amongst other things, lady couriers are proposed. This seems sensible enough, as in an ordinary Continental tour the fine gentleman courier does nothing for the ladies whose pockets he bleeds so profusely, in reward for his small attentions, which a lady could not do quite as well, and more agreeably if she were well-read and intelligent. She would probably travel in the same carriage with the people she was attending, and would

be a pleasant and useful companion. Such companions would be invaluable to the rich young Americans who come to rush through Europe and cram all the information they can in a hurried tour. It is also suggested that artificial-fly-making and the preparation of microscopic objects is pleasant and remunerative work which can be done at home, and work which can be done at home is always eagerly sought after.

There are many occupations which seem to us strangely neglected, and gardening is one. To a person with a small garden in a sheltered situation, it would be possible by care and good management to supply flowers to the London market at times when they are scarce and costly. This could be done with very fair remuneration if the business did not go through too many hands. The rearing of fowls can also be made a very fair speculation by any one who will rise at five o'clock throughout the summer mornings and treat the poultry judiciously. So also a nice little income might be made by the sale of eggs by any one living in a suitable soil in the South of England.

But in no employment will ladies succeed until they cease to be merely amateurs. What they can and cannot do is a very small matter compared with the question whether there is anything which they are willing to learn to do well. So long as they look upon work as only a sad necessity, and consider those employments degrading which they describe by the term menial, so long shall we have starving gentlewomen. Miss Hubbard says, "I trust it may soon be considered as honourable for a woman to earn her own bread as to eat it unearned." She considers that when false ideas of gentility shall have been buried and put out of sight, women will gain much by the business habits they must necessarily learn if they



wish to make a position for themselves which shall have no flavour of charity about it. Several employments which promised well do not seem so satisfactory when tried. Piano-tuning requires great strength of wrist, and must be learnt in very hot rooms whilst the pianos are in course of construction. Dentistry also requires more strength both of wrist and nerve than women generally possess ; so too, we need hardly say, would surgery. The Telegraph Offices are rather disappointing ; the pay is poor and the work fatiguing. But there is one thing which has hitherto only been tried on a very small scale by women, and that is commerce. There does not seem the slightest reason why they might not succeed here. We have seen a well-known novelist attending to her husband's business with amazing cleverness and discretion when he was laid up with illness. We have heard of a young lady having been taken into partnership with her father, who was a maltster. We have known in America of the widow of a banker carrying on the business ; and in some Census statistics of London we find women described as shipowners, manufacturing chemists, owners of factories, and engaged in all sorts of trades which are supposed exclusively to belong to men. In France women are considered competent to undertake almost any commercial business. But whatever profession women take up, whatever trade they practise, whatever things they teach, let them feel assured that only good work will find a ready market at market prices, and that bad work will be a drug refused by all but those who are inclined to give charity pay for it.

## WORKING-WOMEN'S CLUBS.

Nowhere do the extremes of society meet on exactly the same footing as they do across the counter of a great shop. Strange and interesting are the contrasts which there present themselves. On one side, the outer, may be seen a countess, perhaps even a duchess. On the opposite side, the inner, is another lady. The countess may be old, fat, badly dressed; the shop-woman with a perfectly made gown, a graceful figure, possibly a beautiful face. The one may be ill-mannered and cross, the other is generally polite, and often attractive. The buyer is unscrupulous about giving trouble. The seller is obliged to appear unwearying in her efforts to please. In some well-managed establishments, although the mere social difference between the two is immense, the shop-girl is almost as well educated, as well cared for, as well doctored, and as carefully watched, as the other. She is properly fed, has plenty of books to read, a well-lighted sitting-room, and a wholesome place in which to sleep. But there are in London a large number of smaller shops where this is not the case, where no arrangements can be made by which the young women can be housed, and where they are obliged to go to and from their work each day. The shop-girl is selected from almost every class of society. She is chosen partly for her good looks, partly for her engaging address, partly for her neatness and intelligence. Her moral character in many places is not thought of much importance, certainly not the first thing to be considered in engaging her services. Her private life is not supposed to signify much to her employer, provided she comes to her work in good time and fulfils the ends for which she is hired. Her

duties are summed up in one great duty. Her value is appraised according to the number of people she can induce to buy. And the fine ladies to whom she sells are brought oftentimes into close personal contact with people on whom under other circumstances they would look down as from an unapproachable eminence. The pretty little milliner, with the bright hair and the dove-coloured eyes, who shows off the Reubens hat to such perfection, cannot out of her salary afford pleasant airy lodgings or many home comforts. She has even to consider the penny she may spend on the evening newspaper. Often, after her hard day's work is over, she has to take off the fine clothes belonging to her employers, put on her own shabby ones, and like Cinderella return tired and worn to a home in which neither peace nor pleasure is to be found. All day there has been no sitting down behind the counter, no intermission of calls upon her attention, no repose however fatigued she may have felt. When evening comes she goes out alone into the gas-lighted street and may be supposed to seek her home. But there are many steps between the shop and home. The pretty work-girl need not go alone. The accredited and respectable young man may be in waiting to take charge of her, himself set free from similar employment. Too often, however, it is some one superior to the girl in social position, who has no idea of marrying her ; but she prefers the refinement which she does not find in her own rank, and is glad, after her day of monotonous toil, to be taken to some place of amusement where pleasure and, above all, excitement can be found. As the shops close gentlemen may be seen sauntering about the doors, and there is no lack of places in all large towns where comparative rest, and pleasant, if unwholesome, entertainments are always to be found.

Great as may be the contrast between the shop-

girl's private life and that of her customers, it is not greater than that between the small close room which she calls home and the gay scenes of the well-lighted music-hall. Perhaps she lives in a dingy suburb with her parents. Her father is a hard-working clerk ; her mother wearing out her life in trying to keep things together and get her children out into the world. She is so busy that she is obliged to let the girl cook her own supper, or be content with it cold. The fire has gone out, one of the children is ill, another has had a scolding and is sulking in the corner. One of the boys comes in tired and cross ; things have gone wrong with him all day, and he vents his temper by refusing to wipe his boots and kicking the footstool across the room. Another brother, older and now his own master, hastily snatches anything he can find for supper and sets off with a companion to some place of amusement or to spend a quiet evening and have a smoke with a friend. The girl wishes she had a pleasant book to read, some peaceful place in which to sit, something to dispel the feeling of utter exhaustion which has taken possession of her. She resolves that the next day she will not refuse an offer to go to the theatre if she is invited, because she feels less ready for her work in the morning when her evenings are worried and dull. Her parents have no means, even if they had the inclination, to make home happy to her. She probably pays her share of household expenses, or, if she is still in her apprenticeship, is looked on as an encumbrance, and when she leaves, they are satisfied if they think she has obtained food and house room elsewhere. But in many cases she does not live or lodge at home. She rents a garret in some obscure street in order to be near her work, and hither she has few inducements to go except to sleep. The temptations to keep away from it are well-nigh irresistible. Her room is a weary way up four or five

pairs of stairs. It has no furniture but what is absolutely needful. Its so-called comforts are probably shared with another lodger. Nothing in the room is pretty, no chair comfortable, even the looking-glass is ill-conditioned and deceptive. Tubbing in such a place is impossible. Water is difficult to procure, and the soap often forgotten. Fire is a rarity, light is expensive, and she often goes to bed by the rays of the street lamp. Her opportunities of improving her mind by reading, of writing an occasional letter, of cultivating her religious aspirations, if she has any, are simply none. She goes there to throw herself wearily on her bed, and rises before daylight to hurry back to her place of employment. On wet Sundays all she can do is to lie in bed and watch the rain-drops on the windows, or perhaps, if she has lost all sense of the teaching of her childhood, to re-make an old bonnet in hopes of more favourable weather the following week. Such too often is the round of her life.

It seems to be the opinion of a considerable number of people who have the interests of the working classes at heart that the establishment of Working-women's Clubs would be a desirable step. They think that the cheap theatres, the dancing-saloons, the music-halls, the public-houses, offer temptations too attractive to be resisted by young women who, having worked hard all day, have only a poor lodging, or a crowded, noisy, and ill-kept home in which to spend their evenings. They argue that a girl would be better employed in reading a story-book or playing a game of bagatelle in an airy, well-lighted room, where she could have a cup of tea at cost price, than in going about with young men of questionable character to entertainments of a debasing description where she learns to drink gin. The advocates of clubs for working-women do not offer anything to induce those who have already a

home to leave its comforts and its duties. They simply wish to enter into competition with the places in which they see female modesty corrupted, and a craving for unwholesome stimulant for mind and body encouraged. We may lament as we will the changes that are taking place in the constitution of society, and deplore that women are thrown unprotected into the temptations of great towns. The fact unfortunately remains that women will soon be obliged to enter the labour market on much the same footing as their brothers, and the question is how to help them to resist the allurements to vice which must assail those cut off from the restraints and protection of family life. The fatigue and hurry of a long day in a crowded shop, the exhaustion from mechanical work, the giddiness caused by many hours of monotonous mental exertion—all these often produce a craving for excitement rather than a desire for repose. It is sad, but it is the result of what we call “going ahead,” and as we cannot order the waves of competition back, it might be well to try and throw safety belts to the weary swimmers.

If it is found that these clubs for working-women are really likely to be useful, no doubt kind people will be found ready to take the matter in hand. The advocates of this movement ought to avail themselves of the experience of those who have had to do with the Working-men's Institutions. Many mistakes have been made in these matters, and much has been learnt within the last few years. It would be well if the flavour of charity could be kept away. This is the more difficult in the present instance as women cannot help to build premises or keep them in repair when built. A club of men has now been carried on with singular success for several years whose members have never received one penny towards its support. They have bought their premises, built themselves a lecture

hall, given concerts which pay, and have a fair library. They reserve an evening in the week for a dancing class, to which they invite their female friends and relations. They have saved money and talk of starting a building society. They are very proud that, although they have several times been offered money, they have never accepted any gifts except a few books and one or two prints to hang in their parlour. They manage their affairs by a committee of their members, and have never been in debt, for they were contented with very meagre accommodation until they could prudently afford better. All the building and carpenter work has been done by members who have given their time gratis, and they hope soon to replace their present hall by a handsome building. Any competent person willing to give a lecture is received, provided he will allow a free discussion on the subject afterwards, and it is often amusing, however much we may disagree with their opinions, to hear the shrewd and original remarks made by these self-educated and independent working-men.

What seems to us much more needed by working-women than either clubs or reading-rooms are respectable lodgings in central situations at reasonable rents. These might be combined with a coffee-room. There is no intelligible reason why such a scheme, properly managed, should not be quite safe, and pay a reasonable percentage on the money which might have to be borrowed for the purpose. At present parents who live in the country, and who would like their girls to learn a trade, are often obliged to relinquish the idea because they cannot find respectable lodgings at a price which they can afford to pay. Cannot the Peabody trustees move in the matter?



## WIVES AND HOUSEWIVES.

An old lady famous for her dairy produce, and quite satisfied with the increasing price she could command for her milk and butter, told her steward she wished him to attend a neighbouring fair in order to buy her a cow. She explained to him that it must be young, well bred, fine in the skin, a strawberry in colour, straight in the back, and not given to breaking through fences when it smelt clover on the other side; above all, it was not to cost more than 10*l*. The steward, who was a Scotchman and a privileged old servant, bowed his head and replied reverently, "Then, my lady, I think ye had better kneel down and pray for her, for ye'll get her nae other way, I'm thinkin." Many people besides this old lady flatter themselves that they can obtain the impossible. We all sometimes forget that with other times come other manners, and that the nineteenth century does not necessarily produce the cream of all the ages. It is the fashion at present to assume that by judicious training we can turn out any number of a new species of young women. They are to combine all the housewifely talents of our great grandmothers with the intellectual advancement which comes of Cambridge examinations. Young men of refined tastes but small incomes are supposed to decline marriage at present because they cannot find wives who shall at the same time be Minervas and good cooks. The new species is to supply the demands. By attending schools of cookery and lectures on "the daily wants of man and animals," they will be able to fill the place assigned to them. These ideal wives are to be sensible and pleasing, if not absolutely pretty. They are to be intellectual

companions and always well dressed. They must be first-rate cooks and moderately good musicians, devoted mothers and clear in their political and religious views. Above all, they must be quite convinced that to make some man perfectly comfortable is the highest aim of female existence. This is surely a little unreasonable. We do sometimes meet women combining the intellectual, the useful, and the ornamental, but they are rare. A woman of exceptional talent and with perfect health is no doubt able to get through an enormous amount of work. She can manage to do a great many things and to do them all well. We certainly have had one Mrs. Somerville, but then for one Mrs. Somerville we have a thousand Doras. Because a few clever women who would make their mark anywhere can do wonders in domestic economy, there is no reason to expect ordinary English girls, with moderate abilities and perhaps delicate health, to fill ably a most trying and laborious position. Indeed, young women have rather a hard time of it at present. Solomon's paragon of wifely perfection is always being thrown in their teeth. They are constantly reminded by their pious friends how she looked well to the ways of her household, and rose before daylight to make the breakfast instead of coming down at ten o'clock. These kind mentors forget to add that King Solomon is not at all sure whether such a prize as his virtuous woman is really to be found. He is certainly most careful not to endow this apparently imaginary character with any personal charms. He expressly speaks of beauty as a "vain" thing. He does not say that she played upon an instrument of ten strings, nor does she seem to have expounded the Law and the Prophets even to her handmaids. She is, however, described as having plenty of muscle, in which our modern young women are no doubt sadly deficient. Solomon, like all wise men, seems to have been

before his age, for he advocates "Woman's Rights," and advises that his paragon, when she can be found, may have "the fruit of her hands." She certainly deserves no less. But even if this virtuous woman could be found, she would not satisfy us nowadays. The allegory of *Realmah* has more basis of truth in it than most of us are willing to allow. It would certainly take three average English girls well mixed to make one model wife of the type quite common in the stories now current illustrating good and bad household management. Social reformers who embody their theories in the guise of fiction enjoy great advantages. They are saved the trouble of having to grapple with inconvenient facts. The story can be made to any pattern, and there is no reason to allow existing difficulties to interfere with the symmetrical arrangement of the plot. "Our parish" in a story-book can in six months, or even less, be changed from a den of lions into the garden of all the graces. A dove-eyed "sister" and a model curate can reclaim most of the reprobates. A severe epidemic can be made use of to carry off those hardened sinners whose complete regeneration in this world would have been almost too much of a traveller's tale to present to the most indulgent public.

We take up at random one of the many stories on social subjects with which every bookseller's counter is littered. It is on housekeeping. The principal character is a pretty and harmless young girl. She is married to a man whose only fault seems to be that he has only five hundred a year instead of five thousand. Even on this small pittance he manages to give her a pair of diamond and turquoise earrings. We confess to a sincere pity for the poor wife, but such emotion is sinful and we have crushed it. The good girl of the story is one of those proverbial beings whom we, perhaps erroneously, believe to be nearly

related to the race who live in glass houses. This pattern and very young matron marries of course the man of her heart. The man of her heart has not a very long purse ; its exact depth is not mentioned, but he has considerably under the income of the thriftless couple who have five hundred a year. His industry and integrity are intense: This matchless couple can only afford one small servant. To get through her work she is obliged to rise at half-past five, which she seems to do willingly, thanks to the atmosphere in which she lives. The master and mistress rise soon after, and breakfast is served at seven in summer and at half-past in winter. They are sustained in their early rising by a luxurious meal prepared by the lady the day before. After this well-appointed repast, and when her husband has gone off to his work, she proceeds to what she calls her "kitchen fancy work." This consists of first going out marketing, and then returning to prepare appetizing dishes for her husband's evening meal. "Bread, cakes, pastry, potted meats and every kind of preserve were made by her own hands." Nor are the poor neglected. She has not of course much money to spare, nor, we would have thought, much time. However; she manages to make and distribute nourishing meals to the pensioners recommended to her by the clergy of the parish. In the afternoon she is disengaged for needlework, reading, writing letters, and paying and receiving visits. In the evening she waits for her husband with open arms. We will hope that he does not often miss his train so as to keep her longer than is absolutely necessary in that fatiguing posture. The maid-of-all-work in spotless cap and apron forms the background of this pleasing picture, and brings up for supper the gastronomic achievements of her mistress's morning labours. In the evening the young couple garden or build fowl-houses. Sometimes the wife makes home melodious

with her sweetly sung songs, but she throws aside every occupation in which her husband takes no share. When he brings home a friend from town it is to be entertained by her lively and sensible conversation. One day the thriftless girl of the story, who is a cousin, comes to dine. This is the bill of fare, all prepared at home, and, as far as we can calculate from the items given, costing only eight shillings and fivepence:—Palestine soup, with *croûtons* fried to perfection; soles *au gratin*; stewed beef of the most enticing description: a fowl “stuffed with some delicious and mysterious compound of pork and shalot, and covered with a white sauce”; tartlets, a lemon pudding and a cold *soufflé*. Everything is perfection and no cloud of anxiety crosses the face of our young housewife as the covers are removed. She sits with ladylike ease, for she has looked well to the ways of her household, and brought her food from afar. We get another glimpse of her after ten years of marriage. In real life she would probably be a worn-out woman with nine children. She would possibly possess the beauty and tenderness of motherhood, but would no longer be addicted to giving little dinners. A story-teller can, however, have it all her own way. The children are prudently limited to four. The husband has trebled his income. He has put by for each child at its birth a provision which will amount to a small fortune when it comes of age. Health and happiness reign everywhere. Virtue is rewarded as it ought to be, and is not, elsewhere. The unthrifty and frivolous wife of the book is removed from this earthly scene of butchers and bakers, and the long-suffering husband is provided with a wife of the correct pattern, which is, however, scarcely necessary, as an old lady who has heard of his troubles, and watched him out of a back window, leaves him a fortune. We have given an outline of this story merely as a sample of many now published.

They find a ready sale, because the problem of how to combine comfort and elegance on a small income is one of the questions of the day. We scarcely think it can be solved by drawing pictures of a species of young ladies whose supply is likely to be so limited as to be almost inappreciable.

If young men whose incomes are under five hundred pounds a year were bound over not to marry any one who had not earned a diploma in domestic management and elementary physiology, a race might be produced by a process of artificial selection who would be able and willing to do all that is required of them. This new race could not marry before five and twenty, for, having to learn so many things, they would have to continue their education much longer than at present. This would, however, have the advantage of giving their constitutions time to harden. But love, that unfortunate disturber of the best-laid schemes, steps in, and men marry pretty little nonentities without diplomas for the foolish reason that they like them. They must be prepared to take the consequences, and must not expect the pleasant girl they met at a ball to turn into the housewife of the Proverbs, with the accomplishments thrown in. In households where there are grown-up spinsters it is most desirable that they should help in the work of the house. They should spare no pains to add to the comfort and elegancies of their home. They ought to learn cooking and nursing, plain sewing, and everything that is useful. On the other hand, it can scarcely in reason be expected that a young married woman with children, and with only the assistance of a raw girl, should cook for hours every day, dust her rooms, nurse her babies, keep up her accomplishments and retain her hold on society and her husband. Perhaps a little wholesome simplicity, and war to the knife with Mrs. Grundy, might do more for the happiness of young couples with



limited means than an attempt on the part of the wives to perform the work of three servants, and to keep up an appearance of having nothing to do but to amuse themselves.

### POCKET-MONEY.

The man who defined happiness as "having a nominal income of five thousand a year and a real one of ten" merely meant that he liked to have plenty of pocket-money. He had made the discovery that it is not in the spending of an income, however handsome, that real enjoyment is to be found, but in the possession of a large percentage over and above the fixed scale of yearly expenses. A shopkeeper with a steadily increasing trade may have more use of his money than some of his customers who are twenty times as rich. Our poor seem to imagine that all lords go about with their purses full of bank-notes of large amount, with which they could light their cigars if it so pleased them, without suffering even temporary inconvenience. They would not give credence to such a fact as that some time ago, when one of our most wealthy young noblemen came of age after a long minority, he felt almost like a younger son. The vast accumulations of the estate had been invested to the last penny in improvements, which, although they eventually added enormously to his rent-roll, left him for the time being practically without pocket-money. He could of course borrow to any amount, but the mere notion of such a thing was too ridiculous. In some way or other the greater number of our aristocracy allow themselves to be so burdened with permanent expenses that they are not able, even if they were willing, to do the great public services which might well be expected from them.



Those of our middle classes, too, who have fixed incomes very rarely so apportion them as to leave a sufficient margin for the extras which make all the difference between being able to enjoy life, and spending it in the endless drudgery of trying to make ends meet.

Women, as a rule, suffer a good deal from want of pocket-money. Young men send in their bills to their fathers, and have generally a sum wholly independent of necessary expenses to spend as they please, whilst their sisters have usually only an allowance for dress. In ordinary cases, and particularly where there are many girls of one family, this allowance is not one calculated to show any margin when the milliner's bill is paid. Miss Yonge lately spoke with regret of the ignorant young women who dabble in literature merely for the chance of earning a few pounds. She perhaps for a moment forgot of how much importance even a few shillings may be to a person who finds it almost impossible to make her income cover inevitable expenses. Girls are often subjected to painful humiliations when staying at friends' houses merely on account of this dearth of pocket-money. They are perhaps forced to allow gentlemen with whom they are only slightly acquainted to pay for cabs or for admission to picture-galleries or flower-shows. They suffer agonies from not being able to give tips to servants. But, worst of all, they lose that nice sensitiveness in money matters which ought to be most carefully nurtured, and which of late seems to have gone out of fashion. It is cruel and wicked of parents to permit their children to be placed in circumstances where they are tempted to put themselves under obligations to people from whom they have no right to receive them. A girl, out of ignorance and impecuniosity may sometimes find herself placed in an equivocal position from which

she does not feel able to get free, and cruel embarrassment may be caused because she had not a few shillings in her purse when she wanted them.

As a rule, a married woman in the middle classes is not much better off than her unmarried sister in the matter of pocket-money, if she has not brought her husband any fortune, and if she is unhappily burdened with a conscience. She finds herself in possession of house-money and dress-money, and being probably inexperienced in management, finds it hard enough to keep within her allowance. She never feels free to call a few pounds her own, and is thus deprived of many small pleasures, and even necessities, which her husband would never dream of refusing to himself. This is one of the reasons why ladies' clubs are not at present likely to become very numerous. Clubs presuppose a certain amount of pocket-money which a woman has not hitherto been supposed to require. A man would feel that life was not worth having if he had to account for every cab, cigar, or brandy and soda; but a lady who is obliged to balance her weekly books would have to chronicle the small beer she gave to a friend at lunch, and all her afternoon cups of tea. Refuge might, however, be taken in the convenient item of "sundries," which fill an important place in most female account-books.

Being obliged to do without pocket-money, and to empty the hitherto fairly abundant half-crowns into the family purse, is the real trial of a young man's life when he marries on the same income which he has hitherto spent on himself. He must remain very much in love with wife and home if he does not sometimes regret the jingle of the sovereigns in his pocket which were not mortgaged to house-rent or servants' wages. It will be well if he always remembers that he cannot both have his cake and eat it.

This is the impossibility aimed at by many of our artisans. They encumber themselves with a wife and countless children, and then feel aggrieved if they cannot have as much money to spend on beer, tobacco, and music-halls as their single comrades.

It is provoking to get behind the scenes in a household where the income is amply sufficient if it was only sensibly apportioned, but where every one is made miserable by the constant screw that has to be kept on incidental expenses. The servants, the garden, the stable, swallow up everything. There is no margin left. One of the girls has a fine voice, but it is uncultivated ; another draws cleverly, but has not learnt perspective. Lessons would cost too much, so Lucy must go on singing through her teeth, and Maude doing sketches out of drawing. Perhaps another of the family becomes hopelessly ill from want of proper medical advice. Books, pictures, travelling expenses, and all the little etceteras which add flavour to life, are done without. No one is able to indulge any little harmless fancy or generous impulse. The mother's life is spent in trying to make every pound do the work of two, and her husband's in grumbling at the impossibility of keeping a balance at his banker's. It never seems to occur to them that, by substituting a neat parlour-maid for the puffy butler, and by being contented with fruits and flowers in their season, they might get rid of most of their anxieties and make their children much happier. A hundred a year reserved for household pocket-money can confer a wonderful amount of pleasure. It will buy a new piano, give three people a nice little tour, or present a stained glass window to the parish church, as tastes may incline. It is dull work drawing cheques for the wages of servants who are only plagues, and for the food which they spoil in the cooking. "Where much is there are many to consume it, and what hath

the owner but the sight of it with his eyes?" The French understand this better than we do, and reserve a large portion of their income for their amusements, whether these consist in drinking *eau sucrée*, eating bonbons, or going to the theatre.

We often spoil our pleasures by not providing for them, and so turning them into extravagances. But this would not be the case if we laid aside money for the purpose of gratifying a legitimate taste, be it for lilies or *Lohengrin*. Any one without a taste does not deserve to have pocket-money. He does not know its use. We mean the word in its widest sense of course, by which it can be made to include hobbies, whether they take the direction of ragged-schools or etchings. Children can scarcely be given an allowance too early, but it should not all be for pocket-money. They ought to be required to provide certain things out of it. This teaches them to distinguish between income and pocket-money. Many people, unfortunately, never learn the difference during a long life. Parents are very apt to forget that their boys require to be taught about the management of money as well as how to do fractions. They avoid speaking on the subject before them, which is generally a great mistake. Young men are often extravagant, entirely from ignorance of the value of money. They get into debt before they are aware of it, and have not moral courage to take means to extricate themselves. They treat the allowance which their father intends to cover all expenses entirely as pocket-money, with painful results to all parties concerned.

The enthusiastic affection displayed towards pattern old bachelors and fairy godmothers of the approved type is mainly, we fear, owing to the command of pocket-money which they take care to have. But without it they could not fill their places to their own or any one else's satisfaction. The happiness that

they are able to give keeps them young, and planning surprise gifts fills up many a lonely hour. What glorious visits to the pantomime and the circus, the Crystal Palace or the seaside, the youngsters extract from their magic purses! What Christmas-trees and rocking-horses, kites and canary birds! It is they who supply crisp bank-notes instead of ormulu candlesticks for wedding presents, it is they who help in outfits and buy long-desired watches. Not having any children tempting them to live in a style which they cannot afford, they keep themselves unencumbered with useless and unsatisfactory expenses.

Many a young couple beginning life have it in their power to halve their anxieties and double their chance of being comfortable by so preparing their budget that merely everyday so-called necessities shall not swallow up the whole of their means. But they *will* have the additional servant, or the diamond necklace, or the pair of horses, or the house in a fashionable street, which leaves them without the much more valuable item of pocket-money.

## LADY HELPS.

The world has in all ages contained a percentage of people who think the only way to cure existing grievances is to turn things upside down. It has long been a subject of complaint that upper servants are becoming such fine ladies that they are practically no longer servants. It is now proposed to turn fine ladies into efficient upper servants. Mrs. Rose Mary Crawshay, already well known for the interest she takes in questions relating to women's work, has published a pamphlet which she entitles *Domestic Service for Gentlewomen: a Record of Experience and*

*Success.* In treating of this subject we have therefore to deal with what, so far as Mrs. Crawshay is concerned, is not an experiment in political economy, but a triumph over popular prejudice. Whether in other hands the like satisfactory results would be obtained is the question to be considered. There are many flowers which bloom luxuriantly in a sheltered situation, aided by the daily care of an experienced gardener, which would perish if exposed to the wind. Lady helps may be a success at Cyfarthfa Castle, but does that prove that the principle is one which will work well in ordinary families?

Before discussing this point we had better allow the kind mistress of the castle to detail her plans. Mrs. Crawshay tells us that she has given a happy home—no mean achievement—to five ladies. They hold the positions—we will not say the places—of cook, lady's-maid, kitchenmaid, dairymaid, and upper housemaid. They inhabit the servants' rooms, "after thorough cleansing, whitewashing, and painting." They use yellow soap, wait on themselves, wash up their own tea-things, and set their own table, "which would be very insulting suggestions to ordinary upper servants." Mrs. Crawshay, with true womanly unselfishness, is now ready, nay anxious, to part with these invaluable creatures in order that they may propagate in other houses the gospel she preaches, and adorn benighted homes with their usefulness and humility. She will then in the most self-sacrificing way supply their places from amongst the nine hundred thousand unmarried women who now cry "How long!" and who cannot get situations as governesses, "owing to certificates of proficiency in teaching being required, which they unfortunately cannot furnish." Whenever a new lady help arrives, Mrs. Crawshay on the first morning shares the work with her, to show that manual labour is not in itself a degradation. Unaccustomed

to sweeping—for the practice of a few times does not make her a proficient in the art—she tries experiments on the stairs with the new lady housemaid, and they laugh and joke pleasantly together over their awkwardness, the poor stairs meantime suffering silent agonies, and showing in chipped paint or scratched polish that for every great movement there must be some victims. Mrs. Crawshay has proved by experience that educated feet do not wear out carpets so quickly as ignorant ones—we should have thought the kind of shoes worn had something to do with the matter—and that ladies of gentle birth are more satisfactory as maids than labourers' daughters. The reason she gives for this last assertion is that they are careful to put everything where she can readily find it, and so enable her to be independent of assistance. Mrs. Crawshay does not mention whether they excel in the usual requisites of a good maid, hairdressing and dressmaking, as much as in their refined manners and graceful demeanour. The description of Tennyson's Princess and her girl graduates fades into insignificance before the picture of Mrs. Crawshay solving a much more important social problem. The cleaning of boots seems to have been the first and last difficulty which Mrs. Crawshay has encountered in the working out of her scheme for the regeneration of service, but she has solved it. Surrounded by a bevy of fair damsels of ancient lineage but light of purse, she gives them instruction, illustrated by example, in varnishing their own dainty boots, which the page of the house thinks it a degradation, instead of a privilege, to polish. These young ladies evidently do not venture out on muddy days, else the natty stick and sponge described would be a poor substitute for the blacking-brush. We remember once having tried the varnishing business in lodgings where clean boots were never forthcoming in the morning. Everything went on in the most satisfactory



manner for some time, and our boots, unlike the peacock's toes, were to us a source of honest pride. But one day all this industry and independence collapsed before the sight of a thick layer of London mud. A cowardly and ignominious capitulation to the slavery of the house and a present of half-a-crown were the only result of a week's rebellion against the usages of society. But these favoured lady helps need never dirty their boots, for does not Mrs. Crawshay keep carriages, open and close? and does she not send polite intimations to the lower regions when she is going out to drive, so that the faces flushed with cooking may be cooled by the fresh Welsh breezes, and the lady's-maid may gather new inspirations for the combinations of the colours in her mistress's dress from the waving branches of lilac and laburnum in the avenue? These brisk lady helps, unlike other ladies, dress themselves in a few minutes, and return to their work with redoubled ardour after carriage exercise. There is a most affecting account of the behaviour of the lady helps when some extra scrubbing of floors had to be done in a hurry. No fair penitent in a Bernardine convent could have taken to her knees more enthusiastically, or worn them away more uncomplainingly, than did these delicately nurtured Englishwomen. But we are afraid that the housemaid so highly commended by Mrs. Crawshay, who, passing while they were thus engaged, "expressed herself thoroughly shocked, and fairly drove them away, saying she herself would work later and get through it," must have had a sly laugh in the kitchen at the way the soap and water were being ladled about and wiped up again by such inexperienced hands.

Mrs. Crawshay would like her *protégées* to appear in the drawing-room in the evening, but, owing to the present extravagance of fashion, they now decline this indulgence, as they cannot afford evening costumes.

She however hopes that when flounces, high heels, and chignons have gone out of fashion, her fair friends will not object to adorn her reception rooms with their presence. We remember a very young man giving an amusing account of what agonies he had endured upon finding that the pretty little person to whom he had paid such marked attention on board the Crinan Canal steamer was maid to a lady going to stay at the house of the Scotch cousin who had asked him for three days' shooting. The next time he saw her she was "spreading out the clothes," or rather hanging out her mistress's laces to dry, and he nearly left the house from the humiliation which a boy feels when he has committed some social blunder. Under the new *régime* the Captain in the Guards will walk to church with the lady who is going to make a *vol au vent* for dinner, and the Prime Minister will share the hymn-book of the housemaid who that morning dusted his room.

With healthful work Mrs. Crawshay endeavours to combine healthful play. She takes her handmaidens to public amusements, and, many of them being fine musicians, they are particularly fond of concerts. They are always installed in the highest-priced seats regardless of cost. "Here," says Mrs. Crawshay, "I shall be met by an objection on the score of expense; where the master of the house objects, I would recommend any housekeeper to pay it out of her own pin-money, this expenditure fairly coming under the heading of charity of the highest class." Besides lady helps Mrs. Crawshay keeps six ordinary servants, two of them "strong under-housemaids," and one a "strong, willing Welsh scullerymaid." This arrangement is made to allow the upper servants time for "reading, writing, and music." It is most considerate, for then the maid who has already arranged so that her mistress can dress without her assistance need not be disturbed by the dressing-bell from that delightful

chapter in the *Three Feathers*, nor need the upper housemaid leave the difficult bar in that newly learnt sonata unconquered. The cook may be of a literary turn, and it would be hard could she not be allowed leisure to finish the article on "Little Dinners" in time for the monthly issue of the "Middlesex Magazine."

Except upon the blacking of boots and the use of yellow soap the information Mrs. Crawshay gives with regard to the working out of the scheme is rather meagre. We who have never had the privilege of staying at Cyfarthfa Castle would like to know, before we are asked, whether any of the lady helps are under forty, whether they are called Mrs. or Miss, by their Christian or surnames ; what is the size of their aprons ; whether they wear caps, and, if so, whether they are mob caps, or any other kind equally becoming to the fair sex. Is the lady cook a plain cook or a French cook, and can the dairymaid make delicious butter ? Is Cyfarthfa Castle a sort of stage on which *She Stoops to Conquer* is acted all day long ? and do young men of the Marlow type rush to their friends, saying, "Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle ?" or "This little housemaid runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of the rest of the family. She's mine, she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken."

It seems to us that Mrs. Crawshay has opened up a vista of pleasant pastures, and has found a hitherto unworked field for Belgravian mothers. When the season is over and the marked bird has escaped from the net of the fowler, why not get for the fair Ethelfleda a dairymaid's costume, copied from *Our American Cousin*, and send her down to some model dairy in the country, where in a becoming attitude she can pose in the rustic porch, her neat ankles displayed

under her short petticoat, and her lovely bare arms looking whiter than the milk she skims? Who could wonder if the young heir who prefers barmaids to countesses should be a ready prey to her wiles? Then, too, the hitherto obstinate celibate of the clubs might fall a victim to the proper cooking of his favourite dish, and the confirmed old bachelor, who is nevertheless a *bon parti*, might succumb to the virtues of the housemaid who always puts his things in their proper places. But then, again, if penniless daughters are to become kitchenmaids, why should not younger sons become footmen? Cleaning plate in this country is no harder work than grooming horses in Australia, and many curates have been heard to envy the squire's butler. This little addition to Mrs. Crawshay's plan would solve the difficulty which she has no doubt foreseen, but of which she has not spoken. It would be almost impossible to prevent My Lord's gentleman paying attentions to My Lady's maid, or some pert young footman kissing the lady housemaid on the stairs.

Mrs. Crawshay speaks with tears in her eyes of the nine hundred thousand women who cannot marry. But why cannot they marry? Because, in a vast number of cases at least, they are brought up to be provided for by charity, instead of to be helpmates for honest hard-working men; because they dress themselves in Edgware Road finery, and will not sweep their mothers' stairs. Why cannot a woman do for a man she loves what Mrs. Crawshay wants them to do for perfect strangers? There are hundreds of young men who long for a home of their own, who could afford a working-man's house and one servant, yet they live in uncomfortable lodgings and spend their evenings at the theatre because they do not know any girl in their own rank who would condescend to cook them a dinner, even if she knew how, or who would

not think herself a drudge if she had to do what nearly every German middle-class lady does with ease. If Mrs. Crawshay's experiment results in teaching ladies that scrubbing out a room is a no less worthy work than knitting an ugly antimacassar; that the making of butter is a more healthy and interesting employment than trying to play a bad piece of music on an equally bad piano; that household economy and a knowledge of dainty cooking are accomplishments quite as charming in a lady as being able to make cardboard boxes and valueless lace, we wish her every success. She would thus pave the way for early marriages which would no longer be imprudent ones. But if her plan is to turn things upside down, and still further complicate our social relations, already so difficult, we cannot help wishing that lady helps may be confined to Cyfarthfa Castle.

## DAUGHTERS AS LADY HELPS.

It may be that there are households to be found in which ladies can with advantage to themselves and their employers undertake the duties hitherto performed by servants. There is no doubt that many well-born and well-educated gentlewomen would rather cook all day long than teach a village school, and would infinitely prefer dusting a piano to listening to a child playing scales upon it. But after all, the system of lady helps is a retrogressive movement, and therefore can only have a partial and temporary success. Refined women who are obliged to earn their livelihood will by degrees see that they ought to try and find employment in some sphere where their culture and accomplishments will be of value instead of being unproductive. It is because they are not as

yet sufficiently educated that they are obliged to raise the cry of having no work to do, and in despair of finding congenial occupation, take to manual labour of a not very remunerative kind. But it seems a pity to go searching for new openings in a backward direction. It is labour lost, and induces a wasteful expenditure of enthusiasm on the part of social reformers. There is still plenty of raw material to supply more than all the servants wanted for use, provided rich people would not keep so many merely for show. The raw material might be turned into good servants if we had any organization by which girls could be apprenticed and taught their trade. There is really no sufficient reason why young ladies of the rising generation should take to sweeping rooms and cleaning grates in strange houses, or even passing sleepless nights with teething babies not their own. Domestic service can never solve the question of "Women's Work," although it may for the present stop a gap and supply a few subjects for curiosity. On the other hand, there can be no question that many of our social difficulties would be almost entirely mastered if young ladies would consent to become lady helps in their own homes.

Nothing can be more intolerable than the mismanagement and discomfort to be found in countless households where there are plenty of grown-up daughters, who have really little to do but grumble at the dreariness of their lives, and fret themselves into permanent ill health. Perhaps they take sufficient interest in the housekeeping to wonder contemptuously how their mother can be troubled with such inefficient servants, "creatures" who cannot make drinkable coffee or keep the silver bright. They have no patience with the shortcomings of the overworked housemaid, from whom they expect as much personal attendance as if she had only a lady's-maid's duties to perform. They

cannot think why the gardener does not show more taste in his arrangement of the flower-beds, and why he does not cut off the withered roses. Half of the young women one meets in the country sink into a state of semi-imbecility from idleness and want of interest in their surroundings. From mere thoughtlessness and ignorance they grow up exacting and unreasonable. From want of active exercise they become the ready prey of hysteria, dyspepsia, and spine complaints. They marry any one who will have them, simply because they are so bored that any change is welcome. They make bad wives, because they have never learnt the rudiments of domestic economy. When the unfortunate mother of such daughters allows herself to be persuaded to add a lady help to the establishment, the height of absurdity is reached. Four or five plain commonplace stupid girls may lounge about the house—one with a piece of soiled fancywork, another playing snatches of bad music, a third reading French novels on the sofa, while perhaps a pretty graceful lady lays the fire, dusts the room, and endeavours, probably in vain, to bring order into the uncomfortable and chaotic establishment.

A book has lately appeared in which, under the title of *How We Managed without Servants*, a lady narrates the success of such an experiment. The story offers some good suggestions as to how the housework may be carried on by the grown-up daughters. It is of course assumed that the young people are willing to become "helps," and in fiction it is easy to supply the required number of daughters, all made according to the correct pattern, each willing to undertake a single line of duty, to stick to it, to be good-tempered as well as industrious, and to be, in short, affectionate, useful, accomplished, healthy, and pretty. The family lives at Brighton. Servants, as in most other establishments, are all leaving, and



mamma is in despair. But these angelic girls come to the rescue. They recommend themselves as clean, honest, respectable, teachable, and are duly hired, although they ask no questions as to wages or days out. Adjusting the departments of household work as they can be adjusted in fiction, but only there, the daughters begin by closing the kitchen, and fitting up the pantry for a cooking-room, with an American range and gas-stove. The little dinners long disused are resumed, and are all that can be desired by any reasonable person. Of the housemaid's work they take little account, for they are far from London and its smuts. They have no false shame about opening the hall-door to visitors, and do not complain like one lady help of whom we have lately heard, who declared that her nerves were not equal to such an ordeal. Then, also of course, a charwoman turns up opportunely to exhibit virtues rare in her class. The paste rises as paste never rose before. The soup clears as if by magic. The sponge-cakes are spongy. And, above all, the young ladies retain their pristine fairness and unscorched wrists. The poor of the parish benefit largely, but it is mamma who profits most by the change. She may sit and read the magazines in her armchair, and can look forward without anxiety to her husband's satisfaction with a new dish prepared by the accomplished Adèle. At the end of a month, when accounts are squared, and a formal interview with papa takes place, he behaves in an exemplary manner, and, refusing to make by the savings which have been effected, adds handsomely to everybody's allowance, and puts by in addition the first instalment of a sum which in the autumn will enable them all to take "wing for the Continent." Before they start the girls determine to give a party, only to thirty or forty most particular friends. Their mere acquaintances are intended to "long madly," but in vain, for admission

to "so select and elegant an entertainment." Four young ladies at Brighton seem to have four times as many friends as people in less-favoured places. "Forty *very* great friends" accept the invitation, and "twice forty of a less close degree of intimacy were wishing to be invited." The daughter helps will not hear of a hired cook. They will not have a waiter to desecrate the sacred precincts; no menial step may be heard on their floors. But Fred and a "tall military-looking" man are taken into confidence, and much facilitate the accomplishment of the project by their advice and assistance. They stretch linen on the floor of the drawing-room for the dancing. They help to set out the supper-table, and introduce an element of love-making to the preparation of the salad. They offer pretty compliments to the "helps" as they put parsley round the cold chicken, and almonds on the tipsy cake. The young people go off to dress, and return cool, collected, and triumphant; Adèle, with forget-me-nots and fern-leaves among her golden tresses; Maggie, who is not yet out, with a red camelia in her chestnut hair. Two young gentlemen—of the devoted forty, we presume—appear in good time to take part in the attendance. "Fred stations himself by the front door; Captain Nicholls is at the foot of the stairs"; Mr. Goldock ushers the guests into the drawing-room; Mr. Smythies hovers about the tea-room to hand the "exquisite Worcester" cups. Maggie takes off the ladies' cloaks; Adèle and her mother receives the guests. Of course everybody was never at so pleasant a party; two of the gentlemen propose next day, and all Brighton is at once converted. When the daughters marry, the unhappy parents will be obliged to retire to a co-operative household, as, having tasted of liberty, they cannot go back to the bondage of servants.

Of course a picture of this kind must be full of

absurdities and unrealities. Perfect daughter helps like those described are no more to be found than perfect servants, and the difficulties of the scheme are much underrated. Still this little book may do good by inducing people to try and extricate themselves from the discomfort of ill-trained and inefficient servants. It at least proves that there is a great deal of household work which may with advantage be done by members of the family, and that by these means money may be saved to spend in travelling or education. It was lately advocated in a pamphlet on "Woman's Work" that the colleges which may in future be built for the higher culture of our girls should have boarding-houses attached, and that the mistress of these houses should see that the girls were trained in household duties. A very few hours in the week would be sufficient to enable them to acquire a great deal of practical information. It is most likely that their health would be benefited, and there would be little fear that their general studies would be retarded. There is no doubt that every young woman ought to have a certain knowledge of domestic economy, whether she is going to be a doctor, a governess, or a wife.



## LONDON OUT OF SEASON.

THE absence of a few hundred families from a population of three millions affords a singular example of the disproportion of cause and effect. Owing to the nomadic propensities of some fashionable people, the regular Londoner finds himself surrounded with a new order of things. His experiences are of a surprising kind. Cabmen say "Thank you!" to him for their fares. The crossing-sweeper, whom he has been accustomed to regard as a millionaire, professes himself starving, and writes to the *Times* to complain of the impositions of the School Board. Friends who in the season pass you with a distant bow, now hold your hand for ten minutes, while they make tender inquiries as to the health of your most distant relatives. If you call to pay a visit, your acquaintance is found with his nose flattened against the window-pane, and he opens the door himself with an impulse of alacrity to which his servants would never give way. He asks you to dine the next day or the day but one after, well knowing that you can have no other engagements. You accept with equal eagerness, for your club is closed for decoration, and your club committee have not thought it worth while to provide for your solitary wants. Some men who belong to many clubs find themselves drafted into the society of strangers, and learn during the autumn that there are worse clubs than their own, more depraved committees, more venal waiters, more expensive and worse dinners,

and greater standing bores. On Sunday you go into church after church, seeking in vain for a favourite preacher or a choir. Deputies reign everywhere; choirs are away for vacation; you are ushered into the best seat with *empressement* by a deputy sextoness, and your shilling gleams in the offertory plate amid a heap of coppers. There is no music, for the organist is away, or what is worse, an amateur supplies his place, and breaks down in the middle of a hymn. In the street you miss another kind of organist, and are thankful to be able to sit down to work without the accompaniment of a brass band, and to eat your breakfast without a hungry monkey to look through the window. In the shops you are treated with unwonted civility. A hundred and fifty young men are ready to do your bidding in Vere Street, and your demand for a pair of gloves or a white tie creates evident emotion. Selling off is the order of the day in Bond Street, and though you do not believe in alarming sacrifices, you find the opportunity favourable if you wish to please your wife with a new dress, or to buy a wedding present for a country friend. But country friends have too often an ambition to be married at St. George's, and you are startled from your seclusion by having to attend a marriage feast, and perhaps entertained during its course by listening to the grumbles of people who have had to come to town out of season, while your candour is taxed to conceal the fact that you have not been away yourself. Of course you profess to prefer London in autumn. Your stay is entirely a matter of choice. Duty has nothing to do with it, and nobody suspects that you have had losses on the Stock Exchange, or have speculated in Turks, or have a partner in Philadelphia, or, in fact, have any reason whatever except your own pleasure in foregoing the excitement of a run to Switzerland or a few weeks fishing in Norway.

Against the pleasures of London out of season must be set its drawbacks. All the windows in your street are decked in grey holland blinds with deadly uniformity. Every second house is being done up, and bristles with ladders, against which you run your hat. Every railing is wet with green paint, and workmen smoke along rows of doorsteps. The flower-boxes, unemptied and unwatered, add by their draggled decay to the universal aspect of desolation. The starved cats follow you into your house, or mew away the nocturnal hours in your area. The traffic in the streets consists chiefly of carts full of carpets to be beaten, and an occasional cab laden with luggage for the Continent. The postman loiters on his round, dressed in shabby uniform and dirty collar, throws misdirected letters into the area, flirts leisurely with the passing milkmaid, who hangs her cans on the railings as a matter of habit, for they are never claimed or emptied. The streets are windy and dusty, and the water-cart seldom passes, for the driver has himself departed for a holiday, and is perhaps enjoying his hard-earned rest in another and a happier watering-place. Woe betide you if you are ill. All the doctors are away, and the best attention your case obtains is a consultation of apothecaries. You cannot even have your will made with decent care, and your heirs fight for years in the law courts because you chose to alter your testamentary dispositions in autumn. If you get into a scrape with the police, you cannot find an attorney to defend you, while your appearance before the magistrate forms an interesting paragraph for the vacant columns of the newspapers. Every little assault is magnified into an attempt to murder. Every inquest is dignified with a heading to itself, and the pent-up complainings of months are poured into the columns of the *Times*, on all subjects, from the drainage of new houses to the robbery of

your game-baskets. If you have any cause of grief, if you nourish the sense of any public or private injury, now is the time for making known your woes. If you have a new theory to develop on the cells of bees, a new interpretation of a Greek text, an experience of railway inconvenience, a bad smell in your house, a dishonest servant, or a grievance against the vestry, now is your opportunity. It is wonderful how the little annoyances of every-day life, the crumpled rose-leaves which were imperceptible during the season, can assume vast proportions, and, like bogies in the twilight, spread their giant arms, and terrify the lonely dweller in town. His country cousins, who come up in large numbers at this season, wonder how he can live at any time in a place filled with smoke and sewer gas, infested with murderers and mad doctors, where the houses are tumbling about his ears, the dray horses running over him, the river yawning to swallow him, the Underground Railway asphyxiating him first, and then cutting him to pieces. These visits of country cousins are the only interruption of the monotony of town life in August, and it is no wonder that such gloomy impressions of London are carried away. Though they are amazed at the crowd on the pavement, it is not a crowd to impress them favourably like the well-dressed throng in Rotten Row in June. They call on their county member, whom they regard as a permanent London official, like a consul on the Continent, and are surprised to find his house, where they expected at least to dine, all shut up, and to be informed by an old woman, when they ring for the third time, that the family's out of town and will be back next winter. They are also given to supposing you can make up any number of beds, at the shortest notice, and are quite offended that you do not ask your finest friends



to meet them, or get them invitations to a ball or two in Grosvenor Square.

In some parts of London autumn is a harvest time for the lodging-houses. In others they are desolate ; swept and garnished, but empty. The pale bleached faces of expectant landladies look over the parlour blinds, repeating unconsciously the refrain of Mariana in the " Moated Grange." But no one comes, and the maid-of-all-work may be released to take her annual holiday. She arrays herself in gorgeous apparel combining the articles most in vogue during the past nine months, and producing a fine effect when worn all together. Her well-corded box contains a selection from lodgers' wardrobes for her family in the country, and is carried to the omnibus by her favourite potman, who attends for the purpose in his shirt-sleeves. In her hand is a band-box, which conceals the glories of her Sunday bonnet. Its red roses and yellow holly-hocks are intended for the benefit of the young man in the country who occupies her heart while she is absent from town. As she departs she diffuses around her for a few moments an air of happiness in the deserted street. When she returns well sun-burnt, a week later, it seems to have been left behind in the country. Servants who remain in town have even a better time of it. The park is pervaded with carriages full of the coachmen's wives, children, or sweethearts, and it is often interesting to observe that, except for there being more than the orthodox four in a coronetted barouche, the occupants would pass very well for the owners. Women always contrive to ape their betters more easily than men. The coachman, however, betrays himself, if only by his driving. The horses are not spared on these occasions, and have to do more work on a short allowance of oats than they ever do in the season. Drives to Richmond or Greenwich, though in the

season they would be causes of serious question between master and man, are now cheerfully undertaken; and sometimes a little amateur cabmanship may be done at a railway-station by a prudent groom with a brougham. The maids lean out of the bedroom windows with unkempt hair, or improve their minds with unlimited novels in the morning, and in the afternoon visit the British Museum and the "Natural Gallery." South Kensington is, however, the favourite scene of such excursions. It sounds almost as well to tell "missus" about, and combines in itself, with the pursuit of knowledge, a considerable share of the more ordinary pleasures of the public-house. Little parties are made up for luncheon in the grill-room after an inspection of the Prince's Indian presents or the scientific apparatus. Such innocent festivities may be contemplated without displeasure; but you have a feeling of pity for your opposite neighbour who is now at Spa, when you see his housemaid getting in a piano, and know that to-night his new carpets will be trampled by the many twinkling feet of her friends and admirers.

## THE SEA OUT OF SEASON.

There are many places between Penzance and Stornoway where it is quite possible thoroughly to enjoy the seaside in spring, or even in winter. Easter week at Brighton or Torquay may also be very pleasant. A little imitation London with the sea thrown in and the smuts left out is exactly what some people think perfection, whilst the natural beauties of Torquay, added to its fine climate, make it at all times an agreeable resort. But it is quite a different matter to spend a week in an ordinary retired sea-bathing

village which cannot boast of anything but its perfectly flat sands and a good hotel. In fine weather it may be possible to endure the ordeal ; but even one day of icy rain coming down in torrents and a north-east wind blowing a hurricane is enough to sink the most buoyant nature to zero and make the most confirmed misanthrope sigh for society. It appears that on the day of Mr. Bravo's poisoning preparations were being made for establishing the family at Worthing for change of air. No one seems to have suggested at the inquest that the mere thought of being shut up in such a place at such a time of year might be almost enough to drive any one of sense to imitate the Irish snakes who "committed suicide to save themselves from slaughter." When a man, feeling the effects of a winter of hard work, consults the family physician upon his symptoms, he is very probably recommended to "try a little sea air and perfect idleness." Thinking that one resort is as good as another in which to follow out such a prescription, he determines to go to a place in May which a friend had spoken of with praise in September. But sands that are delightful in sunshine are not necessarily pleasant in sleet. A person may not like to be jostled in a crowd, and yet the sight of rows of empty houses with the shutters up may not give him the least enjoyment. To be the sole guest in a large hotel no doubt insures to the visitor an amount of punctilious attention not always to be met with in such establishments. But this luxury has its drawbacks if the visitor is made to feel like a fly under a microscope, or a Royal Highness at a railway-station. Intense silence in a place usually associated with noise and bustle has a strangely depressing effect, which even the champagne ordered for the good of the house does not wholly remove. There is something weird and uncanny in seeing long passages without the slightest trace of portmanteaus,

candlesticks, or boots. It is startling to have the bell answered as if the servant were stationed behind the door, and almost annoying never to be obliged to ask for anything twice. In the evening it would be an intense relief to ring the bell every few minutes for the sake of proving that the house was not entirely given over to the ghosts of the departed; but it is impossible to induce the fire to burn so as to require mending oftener than every quarter of an hour, and it is difficult to dispose of more than three bottles of soda-water after dinner. Going to bed before ten presents difficulties, for the idea of lying awake listening to the melancholy ditties of the wild waves is too appalling, even for tired nature. But notwithstanding sitting up until the usual hour, the night is probably one of disturbed slumbers. The moaning sea, the driving rain, the ill-fitting window-sashes, and the starlings in the chimney that fidget all night and croak and chuckle continuously from early dawn, make sleep a series of feverish dozes and frightened starts. However, a good breakfast with fish that knows not ice brings some consolation; but after that, and before it too—the deluge. Looking out of the window at the rain which sweeps along horizontally soon ceases to be amusing, but in the afternoon the weather clears a little, and the invalid goes out for a constitutional on the beach. The prospect is not much more cheering, for the sea is like sepia, and the sky is a uniform dirty grey. There is no view, and not a single sail in sight. At one end of the sands a lugubrious-looking man with his arm in a sling and his leg bandaged is limping slowly along. Perhaps the Smashem Railway Company are paying heavily for his lodgings and his shrimps. Near him is another man who also appears afflicted, although he holds in his hand a formidable looking proof-sheet which may be the successful novel of the season or a farce which is to have an unprece-

dented run. The two men have several miles of the eternal shore entirely at their disposal, yet they do not seem to revel in their vast possessions. Presently a young ladies' school appears on the horizon, and promises a passing diversion. Unfortunately, the girls turn out to be exceptionally hideous and ungainly, and dressed as only English schoolgirls can dress. A sailor with a can of wriggling worms for bait next appears, and it is not unamusing to listen to his practical, if peculiar, views of natural history. He thinks it strange that the eels leave the river at a certain time of year and return half the size, and regrets that the prawns always be small in the season when there is a good market for them, and at their prime when there are no visitors to eat them. There is scarcely a single little footmark to be seen on the sand, and the shells lie ungathered. None of the aborigines ever appear outside their houses, except on Sunday, and then carefully avoid the beach. A group of children in deep mourning are chasing each other round the empty seats on the esplanade, trying to get warm; but the biting wind blows their black ribands into their eyes, and makes them so miserable that they begin to quarrel and take refuge in sulks. Some little brother or sister has probably died of scarlatina or measles, and the rest of the family are sent to inoculate another house with infection for the benefit of future lodgers.

Tired of "the barren, barren shore" and its cold wet sands, the visitor starts on a tour of inspection through the village. He walks down the principal terrace, which is probably called Bellevue. There is considerable, indeed surprising, variety in the architectural adornments of the houses and in the laying out of the miniature gardens. One might almost judge of the proprietors by the arrangements of the pots round the windows. The house in which the

little maid-of-all-work is singing as she polishes the teapot looks promising. The next one, where the rose-tree has been allowed to fall off the porch for want of a few nails ought certainly to be avoided. The husbands who mysteriously disappear every autumn are now allowed as a treat to stand at the window in their shirt-sleeves on wet days when no one is likely to come. Some of the landladies are sitting behind their curtains like sly old spiders; others, who have children, are preparing tea for them in the smart, but bare, parlour; but the small fry are taught to disappear at the smallest hint and hide themselves like the little sand-crabs. One old lady is sitting knitting, her expression calmly supercilious, for she has let to a "good family" for the long season, and she is sure of more than her rent in the shape of perquisites. Another in easy circumstances who depends on getting a fancy price for a few weeks at the height of the season, is only now taking up her carpets and having them beaten on the common. This causes much indignation to her neighbours, who have put up their clean white curtains. Down a side street is a small shop with "Circulating Library" painted in Brobdignagian letters. This is a welcome discovery. The simpering librarian, who also sells Berlin wool, is only too glad to display her treasures. But there is something rather strange about the books. There are several shelves quite full of orthodox-looking volumes in sets of three, but the names on the backs are entirely unfamiliar. No remembrance of having seen them reviewed, even in the *Cumberland Meteor*, can be revived. Are they unique? Has a Company been formed to print single copies of romances that can find no publisher? There are such titles as *Pale Pimpernel*, *Plantagenet of Navarre*, *Widows' Wishes*, *Spiders' Love*, *To-morrow Morning*, which remind a novel-reader of things he has waded

through, but on opening the volumes he does not find the most distant acquaintance. The custodian of these remarkable books is quite hurt at an insinuation that the new stock has not yet arrived. She considers her collection of the most fashionable and interesting character. Of *Daniel Deronda* she knows as little as the young lady who thought he was an officer in the Guards who had to resign his commission for cheating at cards.

But one of the most amusing things about a place before the season has begun is the makebelieve that is kept up. The omnibus, the hotel fly, and several crazy basket-carriages meet every train with praiseworthy pertinacity. The drivers cultivate a high rate of speed, and look as full of importance as stage-coachmen. But they go to a bourne from which no traveller ever seems to return, and the horses frisk back gaily with empty traps. A waiter stands at the hotel door flicking his napkin and ready to take an order for a sumptuous repast at a moment's notice. The brisk chambermaid flutters about in her highly-starched dress, and seems to be overwhelmed with the preparations for fresh arrivals. Between the showers numberless donkeys appear on the common and vehicles more picturesque than inviting. Notices of lessons in swimming are posted about which cause a shiver, and there are cries of different things to sell but no one to buy. Any amount of spades, buckets, hats, and sand-shoes are hanging outside the shop doors, and although the pastrycook still wisely keeps his shutters up, there are sufficient bottles of sweets in the grocers' shops to poison the children of a whole county. A Punch and Judy man appears to spy out the land; but after a very languid performance, in which many of the principal scenes are suppressed, he goes off slanging his wife, and is no more seen. Toby creates quite a sensation amongst the dogs of the village with his



smart red collar, his superior attainments, and knowledge of the world. But Toby's master could only get ragged urchins for audience, and ragged urchins don't pay. A photographer tries to ply his trade, but his tent is blown into the sea, and only saved by accident. The postman makes his appearance many times a day with a bag of dimensions suited to a London morning delivery. It is thrown over his shoulders, and in his hand are a few letters for a school at the extreme end of the beach. As he passes the swept and garnished lodging-houses, and pauses to look at a new flower or to speak to the grey parrot, he raises many a delusive hope in the hearts of the hungry spiders awaiting their prey. If landladies were not creatures outside the pale of human sympathy, we might wish to be a millionaire, to take all the houses that now lie so heavy on their minds, pay the rents, and send the poor wretches to a far-away midland county where for a time they could be free from anxiety and from the depressingly monotonous splash of the ever-breaking waves.



## VILLAGE MUSEUMS.

It is always refreshing to take up White's *Selborne*, to enjoy through his eyes the "innocent brightness of a new-born day," to let him discourse to us about the pansy at our feet, and teach us to sympathise with each common sight. Three generations have now delighted in his pleasant gossip, yet the book is as fresh as ever. One edition after another replaces the well-thumbed copies in country libraries; only this year, in fact, a really beautiful illustrated one has been brought out. It can never become obsolete any more than Pepys's *Diary*. Gilbert White in his country retirement, and Samuel Pepys immersed in all the bustle of London business and frivolity, alike kept a diary; and although the one may chronicle the doings of a Court, and the other the variations of the weather, each book is valuable for the same quality. Both these men were keen observers of what was going on around them, both tell us with simple accuracy of what they saw. The courtier collected materials which have become history, the parson made observations which have materially assisted the study of natural history. White's *Selborne* is valuable, partly because it is not written to support any theories, and there is no attempt to twist facts so as to make them dovetail into some pet hypothesis. No doubt a few assumptions made by the author have not been borne out when further light was thrown on the subject, but he never fell into the same sort of mistakes as Audubon.

His vanity never carried him away, and there is no straining after fine writing. The most apparently trivial circumstances are introduced in so charmingly simple a manner that we cannot wish the least of them omitted. Why is it that nowadays we find so few observers of this simple but reflective sort? It would now certainly be impossible to find a man of education who, like Gilbert White, had never seen a modern map of Scotland, and who hoped when he did that he might find Lord Breadalbane's seat and "beautiful policy" recognised by the map-maker as "too curious and extraordinary to be omitted." But the higher education of to-day keeps the brain so busy that it has no time to use its eyes. Many a brilliant and cultivated man is full of astonishment when, as he sits on the bank of a quiet stream, ruralizing for a day's holiday, a scientific friend points out to him all the wonders that are to be seen within the space of a few square inches; dozens of different water-plants, all with their distinct classes and habits; hundreds of living organisms dancing along the stream; mosses in endless variety clothing the banks, pebbles showing the geological formation of the district. He is delighted, and gets twice the pleasure out of everything from knowing a little of what it all means.

It is strange that, in country parishes at any rate, naturalists of the type of the Vicar of Selborne are not oftener met with. A clergyman's duties oblige him to spend so large a portion of his time in the open air that with a little trouble he can soon learn a great deal. When going his round of visits from hamlet to farm through the squire's park and along the quiet hedgerows, he has abundant opportunity for studying his furred and feathered parishioners, as well as those whom he has to supply with blankets and flannel petticoats. A knowledge of grasses and the soils suitable to them does not injure him in the opinion

of the farmers, however bovine they may be. Old Betty will be much more likely to listen to his exhortations if he can tell her all about her favourite herbs and where they grow. She makes wonderful decoctions, to the wrath of the dispensary doctor and the delight of her patients, who invariably form their opinion of the merits of a medicine in proportion to the vileness of its taste. Her respect for the parson becomes worship if he will partake of some of her simples and say they have done him good. Then, too, the choir would not sing worse because they were taught to distinguish the different keys in which owls hoot, or to observe how painfully discordant it is to hear two cuckoos discoursing, one in D and the other in D sharp, while perhaps a rival suitor proposes from a neighbouring wood in C natural. Above all, by interesting the children of the parish in the marvellous mechanism of all living organizations, he might do much to check that cruelty to animals which arises more from ignorance and thoughtlessness than from an actual desire to inflict pain. A child could scarcely wish to kill a fly after having seen its feet magnified, or to put out the eyes of a bird when it understood the beauty of their formation. The parson can often, like Waterton, clear the character of some of the animals which are destroyed unconvicted of the crimes of which ignorance accuses them. He may show that nature can so beautifully balance things that she may sometimes be left to select for herself what is to live and what to die, that to destroy little birds is to encourage the ravages of insects, that crows amply pay for all the corn they eat, and that barn-door owls do not suck pigeons' eggs, but help the cats to protect the stack-yard from the attacks of field-mice. There is scarcely anything which arouses a more healthy curiosity in children, or cultivates their intelligence in a better way, than teaching them

to examine into the out-of-door things which they generally pass without notice. A late famous naturalist, on going to a new parish, found the school in a deplorable state. The pupils seemed so dull and stolid that it was impossible to teach them anything. He made all sorts of plans for their improvement, but the bright idea struck him one day that he would take them out botanizing on their Saturday half-holidays. The results of the experiment were miraculous, and from learning to take an interest in the number of petals appertaining to each flower, they soon began to understand their multiplication table, and reading came of itself after they had been taught to use their eyes. Pious people would no doubt be shocked if their pastor neglected Balaam's ass or Elisha's bears, and told the children of the Sunday School something about the robin-redbreast that hopped round the door. The destruction of the Philistines' corn by Samson may be more improving, but the little ones, we fear, would prefer to hear how the oak grows from the acorn, or what gives its colour to the violet. It is sad to think that an acquaintance with the anatomy of a pigeon's wing is not religious knowledge, although sound views about the plagues of Egypt are essential to orthodoxy.

There are few things which would be found more civilizing and attractive to the young men of a country parish than a local museum. It is surprising how easily it can be formed, and in how short a time it becomes, if well managed, a source of pride to the villagers. It may, of course, contain any antiquities that have been found in the neighbourhood, or the carvings which have been removed from the church during its restoration, or any brasses for which room could not be discovered except in the vicarage lumber-room. The principal things, however, to bring together

are those objects which belong to every-day life. The school children might by degrees form a complete collection of the wild-flowers, ferns, and grasses. Some good-natured young lady would paint for them pictures of any remarkable fungi they found, and it is easy to get for a very small sum drawings of all common kinds with which to compare any specimens brought for inspection. Some of the boys will probably have already made a fair collection of birds' eggs, which they can present; and during haytime and harvest curious nests will be found in the standing grass and corn, which can be preserved instead of being destroyed. The village mason may contribute fossils, and even the poor old man who breaks stones on the road will become almost animated when he thinks he has found an ammonite worth presenting to "our museum." The collection, whatever it is, must belong as much to the smallest ragged urchin in the parish as to the largest contributor, and in this way it would be truly prized and kept up. A village genius is pretty sure to arise who, with the assistance of Warton's complete and minute directions, will soon acquire sufficient dexterity to stuff birds better than many a professional. An old gamekeeper learns to preserve the fish of the locality, and is able to give much curious and interesting information about the different flies which frequent different pools, and record the observations of many hours spent in waiting for a bite. There should be specimens shown of every sort of seed sown in the parish, and records kept of the biggest turnip, the longest carrot, the heaviest potato, the monster gooseberry, the most prolific ear of wheat. Everything, however commonplace it may seem to outsiders, is interesting to the little community who know each other; and much know-

ledge upon farming, gardening, and poultry-keeping will be acquired. There should be a large map of the parish hung up in the museum, and on it every change should be marked, as when two fields are thrown into one, when the mill-race is altered, a new house built, or an old one pulled down, a field drained, or the course of a river turned. A record should be kept of the large trees taken down, their age, the state of their timber, how much wood or bark was sold. When a new plantation is made it should be chronicled, and what sort of trees it is composed of mentioned, so that information may be gathered as to what plants thrive under certain conditions. It would soon become a source of pride to see how many different species of forest-trees could be cultivated successfully, and a new beauty would be added to the landscape.

A loan collection must not be omitted, for that is often the most interesting part of such an institution. It is astonishing how many queer things come to light when such an exhibition is started. There is some rare old book which proves to be almost unique. A choice bit of Bristol china belongs to one of the poor women in the almshouse, who has seen better days. The carpenter has bought a piece of finely-carved old oak for a few pence at an auction. One of the farmers finds in the hay-loft a pair of fire-dogs which are of a design so beautiful that they are sent to Birmingham to be copied for the squire's new fire-place. A beautiful processional cross turns up in the budget of a tinker, who sells it for sixpence. Quaint old samplers will be lent from the walls of farmhouse parlours, and perhaps the brocaded wedding-gown of a long-mouldering ancestor. The soldier home on furlough, the sailor returned from the North Pole, is sure to have something to show; and the successful gold-digger, or the young fellow who tried his luck in



the diamond-fields, may contribute his quota towards the miscellaneous display of curiosities. There should also be a corner kept for specimens of the industries of the parish, whether lace-making, straw-plaiting, or embroidery. The best-knitted pair of stockings; the prize work from the girls' school; the piece of carving done in winter evenings by one of the boys; the hammered hinge which the blacksmith made after his own design—all these are sure to bring visitors who will be interested in them; and in later days young men will be found to date the time when they began to take a pride in their work from the day they contributed something to the village museum.

### A DAY OUT OF TOWN.

The third-class excursions indicated in the daily papers by the title of "days out of town" have of late years become quite as much a recognised institution as the recess of Parliament. The excursionists are to be met with everywhere at this season. They are the terror of elderly ladies who, having paid for first-class tickets, justly expect a full share of a first-class carriage to be reserved to them. They are the recognised prey of railway accidents, and the excuse for all deviations from the published time-tables. In picturesque neighbourhoods they are the thorn in the flesh of the regular residents, who find, where every prospect pleases, that not only men, but women and children, and especially infants in arms, are vile. They are the subjects of many a pathetic appeal in the *Times*; they are the joy of country public-houses, and will empty an ordinary beershop at a draught. To the railway porter, whom they defy, they are the

scum of the earth. To shunt a luggage train into a large party of them he cannot be persuaded to regard as anything worse than an accident. They strew broken glass over the fairest valleys in England; they litter Bushey Park with orange-peel, and whiten the graves of Cistercian abbots with old newspapers. Where archæologists go, they go, but they do not archæologize. Where landscape-painters paint they sing. They eat pork-pies on the upland lawn, and dance merrily round the aged thorn. They stare vacantly at Hampton Court beauties, and listen unmoved to the words of housekeepers in show places. They thirst much and perspire much, but on the whole seem to enjoy themselves. Their hearts are light, if only for one day, and, since two score of them are an ordinary load for a pair of horses, it is to be hoped, in the interests of humanity, that their bodies are light also.

A little guidance and sympathy might sometimes be well bestowed on these nomadic hordes. There is a humanizing influence in fine scenery and venerable associations to which they are not wholly insensible. But the feeling needs to be called into play. They cannot apparently awaken it for themselves. The people who are most capable of instructing them without tiring them are too much given to despising ignorance, and have no idea of coming to meet it. Yet when, by chance, a party of excursionists hear a stirring address on the history of some old ruin or the field of some great battle, the speaker has never to complain of any want of attention. This sort of thing is left too much to clergymen. The very fact that it is their duty to do it makes it distasteful to excursionists who have come away from duty and all connected with it for the day. The difference may be seen when a party of operatives, a working-men's club, with its committee to organize, is compared with a school

treat, where a very different system of management prevails.

It is very easy to give school children a feast of buns and tea. The daughters of the squire feel that they look their best as, in artistically simple costumes, they hand the bread and butter or fill the overflowing cups. How becoming it is to play ball with the little ones, or minister tenderly to the consolation of some chubby darling who has broken his knees in a race! These offices are their own reward. They combine in sweet proportions the beautiful and the good. Mamma for once overlooks a little flirtation with the curate or some other ineligible. Her face beams with motherly kindness as she contemplates the human creatures who at other times are so very far off.

It is much the same when the village choir visits the rectory. In the country the clergy are the great levellers, and at a church luncheon or a harvest festival the old woman from the almshouse is helped to chicken by the county member, and the bishop's wife is indebted to the schoolmaster for the salt. But in the great manufacturing towns, and above all in London, such social amenities are impossible. So at least most of us think. The lady who can organize a Christmas-tree for the Sunday scholars of her country village, who can call together mothers' meetings and arrange all the details of a bazaar for the restoration of the church, would stand appalled before the prospect of entertaining a hundred dock labourers from the East-end, and would succumb altogether to the effort of receiving their wives and children. From them, notwithstanding her most elaborate blandishments, she will receive no pretty courtesies, nor will a single forelock be pulled upon a single head. They cannot sing, or, if they could, her hair would stand on end at their songs. They do not distinguish between grass and gravel in the garden, and will lie at

full length upon her mignonette. The children cannot play in the sunshine which they have never seen so bright before. They cannot run races, for they have never run in town. Two of them will be found plotting in a corner the surreptitious concoction of a mud-pie from the contents of a new flower-bed. Two more will be detected in imprudent investigation of the beehive. The women will shock her susceptibilities even more. Their shabby finery, their loud voices, their rough language, their fear and contempt for their husbands, their chastisement of their children, their nourishment of their babies, all these and suchlike things will horrify her. But above all she is surprised at their want of reverence, their complete insensibility to her exalted dignity. They take no notice of her presence, or they ask personal questions with simple directness, and contradict her with prompt readiness. When she gives them her strongest tea and bestows upon them her sweetest buns, they openly hint at a preference for beer, and even insinuate the addition of a drop of gin. When at length they are gone she vows that her efforts in this direction must cease, and that henceforth she will content herself with the enjoyment of such charity as her own neighbourhood permits.

The Lady Bountiful's disappointment, however, would be mitigated did she know that her kindness was not quite thrown away, that the day at her house is long remembered with pleasure, that her guests were wholly unconscious of their own deficiencies of manner, and quite ready to pardon her haughty deportment. If the same party came back to her a second year, she would find them improved; improved from her point of view, that is. The mollifying influence of gratitude would show itself in a less shy reserve on the part of the men, and a little more delicacy on that of their wives. They would greet her with a smile, if

not with reverence, and would perhaps address her with something akin to respect. Perhaps in the long run she might even discover that they were subject to like passions with herself, that they were not altogether exempt from tender feelings, and could be softened by the exercise of sympathy. Without some bond of the kind it is hopeless to attempt any intercourse between the poor and the rich which will not do more harm than good. The experiment has been tried with success. There are houses in London, nay, even in the fashionable squares of the West, where it has succeeded. Parties are given now and then. The streets and lanes of a crowded district in Westminster or Soho furnish the guests. The silk and velvet hangings of the drawing-room and the picture-gallery are uncovered. The family plate is on the supper-table. Flowers are everywhere, and a nosegay is provided for each guest. Young gentlemen come too, and read a ballad from Tennyson or a chapter from Dickens. Young ladies sing, "Annie Laurie" and "Home, Sweet Home," and the hard look dies out of stony faces, and tears run down from bleared eyes; the long-forgotten days return, the vows made years ago at some country confirmation, the advice of parents dead and buried, the love of hearts, and the sound of voices long silent, rise up like incense and perfume many a weary day afterwards. The servants are seldom unwilling to enter into the spirit of such occasions. They too may be benefited, incredible as it may seem to their lofty minds, and a little of the contempt of their race for the vulgar crowd may be removed.

There are, however, great difficulties in the way of such efforts as these. If you have a few acres of grass in the country, or even a large back garden in the suburbs, you may manage with more ease. Something of the kind has been done by bringing a party

from Lambeth or Rotherhithe up the river in a steam-boat. The tea is laid in the garden, and the grass is abandoned to the tramp of heavy feet. The men are allowed to smoke their pipes, and cigars are offered to those who prefer them. An extempore booth is constructed, and a play performed by the young ladies of the family. It represents some domestic story calculated to interest and move the feelings of the audience—the loves of the two servant-maids, perhaps; the rival fascinations of the shop-boy and the baker's man; the joys and sorrows of home; the evil effects of excessive alcoholism; the man who beats his wife, and the woman who scolds her husband, with the old moral of Hogarth's apprentices, and not too much sermonising to point it. It is not given to every one to be able to accomplish such things. But something of the kind may be done; and when, as the evening wanes, an orator is chosen by the party and mounted on a form to deliver himself nervously of a string of words, chosen more for their magnificent length and sound than for their absolute appropriateness, he yet conveys unmistakably the hearty thanks of self and mates for the entertainment, and it is easily perceived that something has been done not without the attainment of a measure of civilizing influence.

The great difficulty and drawback about excursions from London is their eleemosynary character. The appeals in the daily papers are for subscriptions from the wealthy to take the schools or clubs of some poor district for a day in the country. We cannot help thinking that this might be better managed. One or two clergymen and organizers at the East-end have tried a different system with success. A small monthly subscription throughout the year, or a small payment by tickets at the time, suffices to cover the expense of chartering a steamer or an excursion-train, or to pay for a few vans. What is then wanted from the wealthy

is leave to visit a park, or to walk through a great house, with a gift of fruit and flowers, and perhaps the loan of a tent for dinner. These are things which money cannot buy, and for which subscriptions are subscribed in vain. Shady trees, sunny banks, a limpid spring, a few hampers of cherries or gooseberries, and a few baskets of roses are worth more to excursionists from London than anything they can buy at home to take with them.

### FREE LIBRARIES.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the success which has attended the opening of Free Libraries in Manchester, Leeds, and other large provincial towns, it seems more than strange that London should not at least have followed the good example set in the country. It is difficult to pay a visit to the miserable building at Westminster, the sole place in which advantage has been taken of the act, without a feeling of humiliation and disgust. You enter by a small shabby passage on the walls of which hang neat lists of the new books received, but not yet catalogued. On the left is a door into the Reading-room. It is, say, eight o'clock in the evening, and the gas is lighted. There are about fifty men assembled, mostly of the artisan class. There is perfect silence and good behaviour, but every one looks weary and depressed. An indescribable air of dreariness and poverty pervades the whole place. It is impossible to feel at home or to breathe freely. The Reading-room is entirely unsuited for the purpose. It is the lecture-hall of an unsuccessful Mechanics' Institute, and round it runs a deep ghostly-looking gallery which is of no use except to absorb the light

<sup>1</sup> October, 1875.



and air and to give a feeling of desolation and emptiness. The ceiling is black with gas and smoke. The floor has no appearance of having ever come in contact with a scrubbing-brush. The walls are grimy, and not a single picture breaks the dull monotony of the dirty grey. In the body of the hall are stands lighted with gas, on which are placed the daily papers. Most of them are occupied by readers—quiet, respectable-looking artisans in their working clothes. On the raised steps at the end of the room, and under the gallery, are ranged wooden benches of the most uncomfortable pattern ever designed by carpenter; but the men make use of the deal tables to lean their elbows upon, so as to save their tired backs, for which the rail of the seats only offers a wooden knifeboard. Possibly these benches were designed to prevent their occupants from going to sleep; if so, they deserve the highest commendation, and the pattern might be reproduced for the benefit of certain members in the neighbouring Houses of Parliament.

It is not without interest to take a walk round the room and notice the sort of books chosen by the men. Light literature, in the shape of novels and biographies, is the most popular, as might well be expected; but it is delightful to see a tired and illiterate man absorbed in spelling out a pleasant story-book. It is the mental food he wants, and it will do him good. What we ought to aim at is to teach our lower classes to love reading, to like it better than the gossip of the public-house or loafing about the streets. Fiction has a high educational value which is not always recognised by those who work amongst the poor. They want to supply strong intellectual nourishment before they have aroused any taste whatever for culture or information. They forget that what the working-man needs above all things is recreation, and that recreation he will have in some form or other at any price; in

which resolve he is perfectly right. The publicans know this, and profit by it. They even bring music to their aid to make their bars more attractive. Those who choose books for the uneducated ought to act on the same principle, remembering that reading at all is an education, and that a desire for higher culture will follow. The attendance in the reading-room of a Working Men's Society in the North was more than doubled by the addition of three sets of standard novels. Next to light literature, pictures seem to be in great request. Some kind person presented the Library with a few volumes of the *Illustrated London News*, and they appear almost constantly in use. A man whose yellowed clothes show him to be a Bathstone-carver has one volume lying open, in which he has discovered some statues designed for the restoration of a foreign cathedral. He studies them long and carefully—for the uneducated mind is slow—but he is taking in ideas, and his work on the morrow will be the better for the hour he has spent looking at other men's productions. Beside him is a bricklayer turning over the pages of a bound volume of the *Architect*, whilst opposite is another reader laughing over an old *Punch*. Strangely enough, there is a considerable run upon books of poetry. One young fellow in absolute rags, and covered with sand and lime, is studying a copy of Tennyson's earlier poems. The page is open at "Dora," and his lips follow the words as if he were committing them to memory. Perhaps he, too, parted from a parent in anger, and recollects with sad longing the mound beside the wheat "where many poppies grew." It is hard to endure a crowded, dirty lodging if he has come from the fresh pure fields, but apparently the village school has provided him with a resource better than beer-shops for making his evening pass pleasantly. Several wretched, broken-down men, who look as if they had

seen better days, are lounging about. They are probably out of work and not capable of doing anything well enough to get constant employment. They have perhaps no roof to cover them, and are glad to escape for an hour or two from the noisy streets. There are not any women in the reading-room, although there is no reason why they should not use it. It seems that Mrs. Fawcett was anxious to prove this, and went to ascertain if she came under the denomination of a "person" and could obtain admittance. She found that here at least her personality was respected and her "rights" allowed. The Reading-room and Library are only open in the forenoon and evening, an arrangement which seems most extraordinary for a public institution. The reason given for closing the place from one o'clock until five is that the labouring-men in the neighbourhood turned it into a casual-ward. They used it for eating their dinner in, and during cold or wet weather might be seen lying asleep round the stove quite regardless of the literary food at their command. They did not even pretend that they came to read. But this was simply the result of bad management on the part of the officials and of the disreputable state of the rooms, for which the men could not feel any respect. The exclusion of boys, too, seems due to mismanagement, and is much to be regretted, if it can in any way be avoided.

Adjoining the Reading-room is the Lending department of the Library. It is only open to the inhabitants of the parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, who seem to avail themselves of it to a very considerable extent. Quite a little crowd of boys and girls may be seen in the evening waiting to get books changed, and it is sometimes surprising what abstruse works on logic and architecture are inquired for and apparently read, if one may judge by their well-worn appearance. There are in all about ten thousand

volumes. A large number are of little value, some because they are inferior books on their subject, some because they have been superseded by new discoveries or later editions. Still there are a considerable number of standard historical and biographical works, and plenty of novels and travels. In books of reference the Library is sadly deficient, and the list of scientific works is quite pitiable in its poverty. Some pious persons must surely have interfered to protect the morals of the parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, for the name of Professor Huxley does not once appear in the catalogue, and Professor Tyndal is represented solely by *The Glaciers of the Alps*, which may have been considered tolerably harmless reading. A new atlas would be a welcome addition, as well as some recent historical books, of which there are scarcely any examples. The Lending Library is admirably kept, and the shelves are the picture of neatness, but the space is miserably inadequate for the proper arrangement of so many volumes, and to preserve order in the inconvenient crowded little room must be no light task. It seems that the halfpenny rate, which is all that the Vestry will raise, is quite insufficient for the requirements of the place; and, after paying officials and other expenses, there is but a small sum left for the acquisition of books.

The Free Library at Cambridge was started in the same year as that at Westminster, but its position is now widely different. There are twice as many readers and twice as many books. The Vestry raises a penny rate instead of a halfpenny one. Boys are admitted, and there is a well-chosen collection of books for their use. To go into the Reading-room is a treat, so comfortable are the arrangements, so bright and clean is it. The walls are hung with maps and pictures of local interest. There are plenty of papers and magazines and several hundred volumes,

which may be freely used by all comers without even filling in a printed form. All sorts of useful things are on the shelves, even to a Bradshaw and a map of the town. Twenty or thirty little boys, as quiet as boys ever can be, occupy the tables close to the book-cases which have been arranged for their use, and they are evidently enjoying themselves thoroughly. The librarian passes to and fro to see that all is going right, and that no depredations are being committed, and, although he has lately had to prosecute on account of some stolen leaves, he has been singularly fortunate in being able to give so much use of the books and yet keep them in such excellent condition. Perfect order is maintained amongst the men and boys by watchfulness and care, and if a dinner is brought in to be eaten, a quiet hint seems to suffice to make the hungry delinquent take it elsewhere.

There is no doubt that we ought to have in every considerable London parish a library sufficiently good to answer all ordinary purposes—a library to be used by the professional man as well as the bricklayer, by the young ladies of the district as well as the shop-girls. The British Museum could then fairly be left more exclusively for the benefit of scholars. Novel-readers and people who go to study encyclopædias could do so in their own parish without disturbing real students and taking up the time of the attendants. At present every one grumbles about the management of the Reading-room at the British Museum. It is certainly a mistake to call it a Free Library, so harassing are the rules about tickets. A person from the country only in town for a few days naturally complains of not being able to use an institution for which he pays taxes. A busy man objects to wait half an hour for each book. It would no doubt cost a great deal of money to start all these libraries, but there are many places from which help might be got. For

instance, the Stationers' Company are enormously rich from their fees, and no one ever hears of their doing any public service. Then the School Boards might perhaps allow some of their class-rooms to be opened in the evening as Reading-rooms for the children in the higher standards and for the use of pupil-teachers. In short, there are countless ways of getting the thing done, if only people would take up the subject and agitate a little.

Leaving the Westminster Library, and turning into the almost unused Aquarium close by, it is impossible not to look with envy at the spacious hall, and to think what a splendid gift it would be for some millionaire to make to the parish for a Free Library. The place at present is a failure, and could be had cheap. The fishes would not do any one any harm; the organ would do every one a great deal of good; it would be an example for other parishes to follow. It would in no way come under the head of pauperization. Surely rich men ought to esteem it a privilege to be permitted to give noble and civilizing gifts to their country, and impart some of the culture which they profess to value so much for themselves. The Albert Hall would be admirably suited for a Reading-room. It is empty and garnished, and if any of the profits of the Exhibition still remain, they might be better applied to this purpose than in bolstering up the bankrupt Horticultural Gardens.

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## COUNTRY BAZAARS.

THE tranquillity of country life is much disturbed at intervals by rumours of bazaars. Weddings have in comparison but a private and family interest. Consecrations are ceremonies as strictly religious as if the service could be read from the Book of Common Prayer. But bazaars are always both family affairs and also religious ; or, so to speak, they make a profession of religion ; for, though they do not aspire to ceremonial dignity, there is a certain flavour of Christianity about them, in spite of their Mahometan name. Various forms of excitement are combined in bazaars, and the proportions are delicately measured. The weather, for example, enters largely into all the calculations either of pleasure or profit. From a town point of view, indeed, country folk are folk who live in a state of constant dependence on the weather. In this respect town people are perhaps unfortunate ; for, if a sense of the impotence of human nature is conducive to the growth and maintenance of religious fervour, the influence of the weather should be an unmixed good to the inhabitants of the country. But, granted a fine day, another question arises. The means of locomotion are limited. The whole family goes to the bazaar, including the baby and the stranger within the gates, but the parochial pony is inadequate to the task of conveying them all. Another and even more serious question is connected with clothing.



How are the young ladies to dress? And not the young ladies only, but also the curate and the school-boy at home. Bonnets, and the problems to which they give rise, are enough to turn one's head. Hats are full of complications too. They may be roughly divided, like consonants or salmon, into hard and soft. Time was when religious differences were indicated by the flabbiness of the rim, the use of cord or band, and the height of the crown. But, unless we are misinformed, such animosities have ceased to influence hats with any distinctness. Not only a wide brim and a cord, but a shaven face, a standing collar, and a cassock waistcoat may be found in conjunction with the most latitudinarian views and the most lax systems of discipline. Ladies' dresses, in like manner, were once supposed to mark, by their elegance or their newness, certain grades of social rank. But now they may be said to divide themselves into two classes, with which neither rank nor person has much to do. Some dresses are fresh from town, and some are merely fresh arrangements of old materials; for the most part these latter are the prettiest. The fashionable costume looks as if it had been constructed without any reference to the features or complexion of the wearer. It may be very fine in the abstract; it may contain the latest shade of sea-green from the studios, and be admirably adapted to display the graces of the lay figure in a Regent Street window. But the old-fashioned costumes which owe their origin to the taste of the retired inhabitants of the country parsonage are often more pleasing, and always more becoming, while every now and then they present to the curious visitor the unexpected attraction of a lappet of old point, a Persian scarf, or an ancient family jewel.

The town visitor is probably regarded as a scoffer on the sacred subject of bazaars. He perhaps objects

to them on principle ; but what are principles to young ladies who wish to get up a bazaar? His economical objections are over-ruled. There are plenty of reasons fresh to hand. There may be a mission starting for the Caribbee Islands ; or an inundation may have taken place in Holland ; or some young heathen may want clothes. But the great reason of all is that the old church needs restoration. You may plead in vain that the church is very well as it is ; that a time may come before long when people will be so misguided as to admire panelling of the seventeenth century, and so blinded as not to object to monuments in the chancel, and that, at the worst, if the church really requires repair, the parish is rich enough to pay the bill. There is no occasion, it may be added, for passing the money of the benevolent through a sieve of fancy-work and raffles. Why should marquees be necessary to the proper discharge of a religious duty, or why should profane soldiers play waltzes to a party of clergymen? But such arguments are received with the contempt they deserve. They are beside the mark, to judge by the result. Their futility is apparent. It is true, the church has done nothing for which it should suffer restoration. The Low Dutch may perhaps like water rather than otherwise. The little negroes will probably find clothing superfluous, if not inconvenient. The mission to the Caribbees may have been devoured months before, and nothing left of it but the parent Society at home, like a source without a stream. But the young ladies have made up their minds to have a bazaar, and vain are the objections of men. A thrill of emotion passes through every female bosom in the parish as the decree goes forth. Accomplished hands and eyes are busy at once with Berlin wool and water-colours, with dolls' houses, and, more especially, with a new invention which bears a bad

name. For aught we know to the contrary, "crewels" may be innocent enough in themselves, but the word has a questionable sound. All works of the doyley and antimacassar kind are obnoxious to the criticism of the sterner sex. Their appearance and uses are as hideous and mysterious as their nomenclature is awkward and absurd, and crewels may be no worse than any of the other and accustomed implements of drawing-room torture. But devotion to the needle and the hook is alternated with the arrangement of dried ferns and the seaweed gathered last autumn. Heraldry comes into unwonted use, and the curate who can write in black letter finds himself suddenly a person of importance. He is invited to tea, he is allowed to give his opinion freely on various subjects, including embroidery, and, unless he is more than ordinarily stupid, he gets mysterious hints as to the prohibitory price to be placed on certain of the choicer productions and their ultimate destination. The decline of bands has been a sad loss to bazaars. We do not refer to brass bands, which flourish in full blast at every such festival, but to the venerable relics of a time when the clergy left off wearing beards while they retained the fold of linen which had protected their cassocks, and which in later days furnished opportunity for paying so sweet a compliment to the reigning curate. His function, indeed, in the preparations for the bazaar is a very definite one, and it is well when he happens to be a man of taste. The design of the more important objects to be worked will probably be entrusted to him. If he is Low Church, he must write texts for his fair friends to illuminate, and choose mottoes for religious markers, such as the sentence from the *Pilgrim's Progress*, "Here Christian fell asleep." These quotations are admirably adapted to the exigencies of bazaars where piety and playfulness go hand in hand. If the clergy-

man is High Church, he is still more in request. He superintends the preparation of altar furniture in divers colours in needlework, appropriate to the changing seasons—faldstools, banners, and particularly touching little blotters, with the church as it is on one side and the church as it ought to be on the other.

As the great day approaches the excitement becomes more and more intense. To the pious bazaars are what balls are to the worldling. The revelry is much the same in both places. Perhaps on the whole there is a more decorous observance of the proprieties in the ball-room. Some form of introduction is a necessary preliminary to flirtation; young ladies cannot go very far afield without a chaperon and nooks and corners for happy lovers are not frequent or very secure. But at the bazaar it is in vain that the anxious mother flutters round her reckless offspring. They plunge in regardless of her frowns, and are soon far beyond her reach. She cannot prevent the most ineligible of the gentlemen present from addressing her charming brood. No introduction is needed to the pretty merchants in the fancy fair. For in one respect the bazaar combines the ballroom and the theatre, and the young ladies who play at shopkeeping may conquer by their stooping. Young Lord Meilanion may lean over and whisper soft nothings into the ear of the Lady Atalanta so long as he can detain her by flinging his golden guineas before her on the counter. But, on the other hand, the handsome little Tomkins, whom mammas hate and their daughters like so much, has quite as good a chance of winning in the race. Every now and then the relaxation of a turn in the grounds is necessary to the continued assiduity of the stallholders, and such wanderings have a tendency to protract themselves beyond the just requirements of

the case. A shady seat under a spreading tree, a quiet walk by a dark yew hedge, the reflection of two forms in a glassy pond, are a relief after the heat and bustle of the marquee. Another visit, necessary at short intervals, must be paid to the refreshment tent, and the parental eye is again eluded. The refreshment tent is an oasis in the desert, there only can anything worth buying be had for one's money. It is better to pay a shilling for a cup of tea, or two shillings for an ice, than to waste half-crowns and half-sovereigns on pen-wipers, dolls' shoes, card-baskets, and babies' pinafores. A man can only wear two or three nosebags at once, and cannot present more than that number to other people. One flower injudiciously bestowed may undo in a moment what has been the labour of love for years.

Some wise people confine their attention wholly to raffles. In this innocent kind of gambling much time and money may be spent for the good of the cause. The danger of winning is not so great as to make the excitement insupportable, though sooner or later there must come an end to taking tickets ; and it is well for the unwary visitor if he is not involved in the possession of a fender-stool, a cradle, or even a writing-desk. From such an appalling prospect he turns to Love's Letter box, especially if he be blest with the companionship of an agreeable and not too susceptible partner. For the most part only engaged girls can be cautiously conducted to the post-office window. Then, too, an amateur concert may dispute the musical honours of the day with the military band ; and though the singing is probably inaudible, owing to the thinness of the tent, it may be not the less pleasant on that account. As a last resource, there is always the funny man, a chartered libertine at bazaars, of whom one is driven to wonder what he does when no bazaars are going on. He is usually deficient in

personal beauty and of an uncertain antiquity. He calls the rector's daughters by their Christian names, makes fun of the archdeacon, and earns countless sums by feats of jugglery which he does not perform, and by propounding riddles which he cannot answer himself.

### TEMPORARY DUTY.

In autumn, when members of Parliament seek refreshment and repose amongst the heather or by the side of a salmon river, whilst fashionable doctors and successful lawyers cool themselves in Alpine valleys, the greater number of our hardworking clergy are obliged to be content if they can manage to exchange one sphere of labour for another. For those who have many children it is difficult to obtain even this half-holiday. They need not answer advertisements in which sea-bathing, picturesque scenery, or a steam launch is offered. They must resign all hope of "the moderate use of a pony carriage" or the enjoyment of living in a pretty house. These advantages are reserved for the fortunate few who can describe themselves as "without incumbrance." The lot of a poor man, rich in the possession of a dozen or more children, is not likely to fall in pleasant places. If he can afford to move at all, he will probably be obliged to accept the charge of some uninteresting, unhealthy, or secluded parish which has been declined by perhaps less worthy men. The area from which he can choose is small, because he cannot afford much money for travelling expenses, and it is still further restricted by the necessity of finding sufficient accommodation for his patriarchal household. But a married clergyman without children, if he has some standing in his own diocese, or if he has acquired a literary reputation, however limited or undeserved,

will find his only difficulty in selecting from the number of pleasant parishes placed at his disposal.

To those who like extending their knowledge of places and people there is often considerable enjoyment to be taken out of "locum tenancy." To a novelist, in some cases, the position would be invaluable. Many are the curious peeps at life to be had from the vicarage windows. Many a tragedy may be watched through more than one act during the month's sojourn in a country village. A startling revelation is often made to the sympathetic parson simply because he is a stranger. He does not know too much of the collateral features of the story, and it is so much the more easy to consult him upon a difficult question of duty, and to him is revealed the skeleton which has slumbered in the cupboard during the reign of the real vicar. There is something, too, of comedy in occupying that personage's place, stepping straight into his shoes, fulfilling his duties, though he is utterly unknown, wearing his surplice, being attended by his servants, and followed by his dog. It is not without interest to take up the threads which another has been weaving, to keep them smooth if they are found so, or to try to disentangle the knots if matters have gone wrong in the parish. It is often possible for a judicious man to clear up misunderstandings and heal wounds which have long been open. It is also, of course, quite possible to set a whole parish by the ears before the end of a week, and to leave the unfortunate incumbent a legacy of lawsuits, quarrels, and disputes that will make him afraid ever to take another holiday.

It is very amusing sometimes to watch the perplexities of a Broad Churchman who by some train of events has chanced to become *locum tenens* for an extreme Evangelical. His sense of decorum makes him anxious not to contradict the teaching of the man whose



place he had undertaken to fill for a few weeks, yet he chafes inwardly at the idea of seeming to conceal his own opinions. The old sermons he has intended to preach have become useless, unless he happily discovers that by peppering his manuscript plentifully with texts, without much regard to their suitability, and by carefully winnowing out every sentence in which there is a suspicion of common sense, he may reach the level to which his hearers are accustomed. He is very careful when visiting the sick poor to throw no doubts upon the personality of the Devil, and not to question the probability of their all going to perdition and deserving it. He studiously ignores the village cricket-club, though he may long to improve the boys' round-hand bowling. He is even careful to avoid discussions on religion or politics at dinner parties ; but he will be clever indeed if he succeeds in steering clear of all rocks of offence. He may fail when a neighbouring clergyman announces his devotion to snipe-shooting, and in an unguarded moment he fancies he has found a muscular Christian at least. Or his presence of mind breaks down and he lets fall the sheep's clothing in which he has hitherto protected himself, when the squire would administer too strong a dose of Toryism. A Broad Churchman, however, is better able to adapt himself to circumstances than a High Churchman. The exact angle of his eastward position, the note of his monotone, the cut of his whisker, may be the cause of deep misgiving in the congregation. He may insert a redundant collect after the sermon, omit to turn his back on the people at every convenient opportunity, and may have lax views on Gregorians and the confessional. All such things are of deep importance in a country parish, and the absent incumbent receives letters, often anonymous, as to his substitute's enormities. Clergymen who take duty in the country every summer

come by degrees to know as many different orders of divine service as there are days in the week, and as many "uses" as there were before the Act of Uniformity. Bands and black gowns linger in some places. There are diversities of administration of matrimony. Strange local hymn-books are found in use, and customs of bell-ringing and organ-playing are kept up.

Perhaps the most trying position for the *locum tenens* is where the parson's wife and family remain in the parish, and he becomes their guest. Then indeed he feels himself obliged to order his goings circumspectly. He gives offence equally if he is too stiff or too playful. What he would prefer to treat as a holiday is sober earnest to them. He must not wear any but a white tie in the parish, nor lie full length on the lawn in the sun, nor flirt with the parson's pretty daughter, nor jump the churchyard fence, nor play lawn tennis on Saturday. He has to fight over again at the dinner-table all the controversies which he has been so unwise as to start in his sermons, and to give many reasons for every expression of the faith that is in him. This ordeal is gone through at intervals all the week; the opinions of the parishioners, especially of the old women, are quoted for his benefit, and he had better have resigned at once than have hinted in an unguarded moment at doubts as to the authenticity of a Greek text. The children, if there are any, treat him as a superior kind of tutor, or an inferior curate, and the chances are that one of them tells him that mamma has declared him of questionable orthodoxy, and that papa in his letters habitually refers to him as the hireling.

It is not easy to choose among the advertisements with which at certain seasons the Church papers teem. Sometimes a clergyman announces that he "will receive as a guest during September a gentleman in priest's orders, who, in return, will assist in the Sunday

services"; the word "gentleman" being printed in capitals. Sometimes greater inducements are held forth in the shape of shooting, or, more frequently, fishing. Of a picturesque neighbourhood the most is made, and a clergyman is allured to the North by the promise that, if he can assist on Sunday, he may be "free to visit the Lakes, the Isle of Man, or Ireland, during the week;" or he is informed that "Rokeby, High Force, and Cauldron Snout are in the immediate neighbourhood," and that "five or six hours at Windermere or Ullswater are practicable daily." Of another charming place he may hear even more:—"A beautiful neighbourhood, six miles from the sea, on the banks of the Camel. Anglican views." Mere curiosity to know how Anglican views appear on Camel's banks must secure hundreds of replies for such an advertisement. Sometimes the intending tenant advertises himself. One clergyman "would be happy to officiate for accommodations for three weeks in a pleasurable locality," and he asserts of his two children of twelve and ten that their "careful conduct could, under all conditions, be safely guaranteed." There is something very rash in this promise. Children of twelve and ten must be greatly above the average in carefulness if the fondest parent can guarantee their breaking no windows and eating no unripe fruit; unless indeed he purpose keeping them in respirators and handcuffs, or under chloroform, during their visit. Those clergymen who have no such encumbrances are anxious to state the fact, as a greater advantage than even ability to intone, or "medium opinions." Some also think it worth while to say that they "can preach," and nearly all consider a pony carriage indispensable. Now and then the advertiser restricts himself in the length of his notice. "M.A. Oxon." announces briefly that he is "single, moderate, free," adding the word "temporary," which must be taken

to refer rather to the kind of engagement he needs than to the evanescent nature of singleness, moderation, or freedom. When the place is at last decided upon there is a period of anxiety until it has been fully tried, and many are the tragic experiences of the annual *locum tenens*. At one place he may find himself tied to a house overrun with wild animals all eager for a taste of the newcomer, and may have to make his first appearance among the congregation with eyes and forehead swelled and red from the combats of the night. Or the incumbent may have locked up the library, and not a book is to be found except an almanac five years old. Or the fruit in the orchard has all been pulled green and boiled down, and the garden thoroughly exhausted. The horse has been turned out to grass, and the cows are all dry. But such experiences are not common, and they matter the less because the feeling on the part of the parishioners is one of hospitality and welcome. The *locum tenens* is the guest of the whole parish. If he has come from London, he is looked upon with an extra allowance of the pity which country folk always bestow on town folk, and offered cream and fresh eggs in generous profusion. He is forced to make new acquaintances such as he might never meet at home, and friendships for life sometimes ensue. He may in rare cases be able to fan into a flame the spark of genius in some local poet or painter, and may come upon talent in other ways where he least expects it. He obtains bird's-eye views of a social situation previously quite unknown to him, and has opportunities of extending and improving his knowledge of human nature. And, if he is the object of much kindness, he may also be the cause of a little scheming. The churchwardens will perhaps take advantage of his presence to get their own way on some point of procedure in which they have long differed with the vicar.

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## INDEPENDENT LADIES.

To our present state of security may be attributed many social developments hitherto unknown. Civilisation reigns in rural districts as well as in some of our larger cities. The policeman, rather than the schoolmaster, has been abroad among us for a generation, and it has become possible, even in lonely places, for poor weak women to exist without special protectors. If they are so disposed they may live and love alone, or if they like it better, they may assemble in little communities of twos and threes. Fortunately for men who are unwilling to do without female society, there is a law of feminine nature which makes it difficult for more than two or three to be gathered together without disagreement, except where religion interposes with vows and rules. Otherwise communities of women might spring up among us, and not only would man be deprived, as we are so constantly reminded, of his natural slave, but the very constitution of our country would be endangered. Independent ladies, however, have so far signally failed in founding clubs, and we can only consider these as separate and singular examples, not so much freaks of nature as of society; a strange, but by no means discordant element in modern life, and sufficiently rare as yet to have assumed no very definite position. The life of the ladies of Llan-gollen was accounted something very much out of

the common sixty or seventy years ago, but it would be very easily managed now without any one deeming it extraordinary. Lady Hester Stanhope has perhaps scores of imitators of whom no one ever hears. But the independent lady of the present day does not seek to be eccentric. She does not resemble the man-like woman of ten years ago, with her shirt collar, her short hair and petticoat, her long stride and loud voice. On the contrary, she is well dressed, her manners are polite, she wears the smallest and best-fitting gloves, and evidently keeps an attendant who has made a special study of back hair. Nor, again, is she to be confounded with the old maid of tradition, who lives alone because no one can live with her, and who looks upon her enforced independence as a misfortune and a grievance. The offensiveness of both these types is gone, and we have a lady of whom no doubt, we are all rather in awe, but who is usually clever, often agreeable to meet, and always interesting to the student of history and manners.

It is often amusing to observe in a family the way in which one of the girls quietly assumes a predominant position. It sometimes happens that she has a fortune or an estate of her own, but such an accident is by no means necessary, though it certainly conduces to strength of character. When you meet one of these little potentates you do not immediately perceive any great difference between her and her sisters or anybody else, but you observe that the servants come to her for orders, that papa grumbles to her because the post is late, that mamma asks her which tea that is, and why the butter is so hard. She chooses a profession for her eldest brother, and sends the younger to school a year at least before his mother is willing to let him go. You hear everything brought to her notice, from the number of

chickens in the last young brood to the theological bias of the new rector. She invests the family money, gives away the family livings, decides on the length and direction of the autumn tour, and tells you, perhaps in a mildly complaining tone, that, when a thing has to be done, it saves trouble to do it oneself. A family guide and ruler like this is a wholly different person from the lady who likes best to live alone, or at least with a friend. She has little of the managing ability of the other, and would be worried by the household cares of a large family. She keeps a staff of the most efficient servants, all trained to do what is wanted without orders. She has her house in the most perfect order; not that she ever puts it in order, but that she never disorders it. Afternoon tea is served with the precision of a banquet, and is evidently an event in her day's history. She inclines to politics, has views on women's rights and the suffrage, occasionally reads a Blue-book, and recently rather lost her composure on the subject of the Turkish atrocities. She is very liberal, especially to charlatans; not that she believes in them, but "they may be honest, you know." She subscribed to defend the Claimant, though she was convinced of his deception, in order that he might at least have fair play. She inclines to Spiritualism, and patronises every new medium, in the hope, as she tells you, that she may see or hear something to prove its truth. On the other hand, she objects on principle to missionary boxes, does not see why the humble faith of the Hottentot should be disturbed, and wishes she could find a fetish for herself to worship. She likes to ask literary and political people of note to her house; but her male visitors cannot take their valets, and must submit to have their hats brushed by an elderly woman in a mob cap. Now and then, perhaps, there may be a whisper of scandal against independent



ladies of this class. But as a rule, their conduct, defiant as it is of the laws made for weaker sisters, is scrupulously circumspect. That some of the local magnates will not call troubles them not a whit. They choose their own society, and prefer to have no narrow-minded acquaintances, however great. They object on principle to field sports, will not even ride to see the meet of the hounds, and calmly brave the odium of killing the foxes that attacked their hen roost. They are greatly exercised about pigeon matches, and especially about vivisection; in fact are rather unjust to the medical profession in general, for being always in good health they believe firmly in homœopathy tempered by the water cure, and think one half of the diseases of modern life are caused by medicine and the other half by dirt.

The town independents are a totally different class, though they fraternise—or, shall we say, sororise?—with their country representatives. They lead essentially active lives except perhaps during a holiday, when the rest is taken as a serious duty, and performed, like the sleep of the famous Irishman with all their might. They are chiefly young ladies who, having begun life in the lap of luxury grudge the time that has been wasted in fashionable frivolity, and endeavour to overtake the lost hours. Their employments are very various but they are all busy. They visit in back slums, organise trade-unions for poor women, get up petitions to the Queen for the abolition of the College of Surgeons, they paint, they sew, they toil and spin, they are tremendous radicals, never go to church, hold advanced religious opinions, and believe in what they familiarly term the Forklightning Review. It was one of them who discovered hansoms as a mode of locomotion, ladies having previously been condemned to four-wheelers; and they are known to boast that they never offer a cabman less

than his fare, nor give him more. They sometimes live in the bosom of their own family, sometimes in that of another, but usually prefer a flat or chambers where their independence is less circumscribed. They attend auctions of blue china and Chippendale, and look wisely at point lace and embroidery. They affect Queen Anne in their furniture, and dress their maids in the same chintz with which they cover their chairs, in order to obtain harmony of colour. They are much given to art of all kinds, and some of them call themselves artists, rent a studio, hire models, and sneer at South Kensington. They are too busy in the daytime to be seen in the Row, but they are cherished guests at a ball, as they always dance well, make themselves agreeable, and dress becomingly. They complain, indeed, that dresses are not to be had in London, and either send for their costumes to M. Worth, or make them at home.

In summer the success of a pic-nic is often made by the presence of one of these active people. She can brew claret-cup, take an oar in the boat, can swim if she is upset, laughs at showers, and long after everybody else is tired out she can keep up her spirits and continue her flow of good stories and profane conundrums. Unsophisticated country cousins are rather afraid of her, and ask her to stay with certain misgivings. But they forget the adaptability which makes the independent lady so popular, and are surprised to see her quiet and perhaps attentive in church, ready if necessary to play the harmonium, and quite able to lead the choir. They do not ask her to visit the poor but she goes of her own accord, examines the children in the school, behaves with the utmost decorum at a lawn-party, and takes a hand in dummy whist, or argues on theology with the old people. She comes back to town with a feeling of having been very happy, if quiet, and entertains

the city sisterhood with incredible tales of country innocence.

Life in London exposes ladies of this class to the wiles of impostors of all kinds, but they soon learn caution, and women's instinct is often sharper in such matters than men's. They are very stern as employers of labour, and seldom let a contract be broken or a job of work be scamped. They insist on the fulfilment of the terms of an agreement, and are able to attend to minute details in a way few men can imitate. They are very fond, as they openly say, of turning an honest penny, however wealthy they may be, and it was certainly a lady who broke down the old barrier between professional and amateur art and literature. They like to sell a picture or an article, and always profess to enjoy the spending of what they earn tenfold more than of what comes to them by inheritance. As a rule they are admirable housekeepers, kind and even sympathetic to their servants, but exacting the utmost amount of service. Some among them have a Ritualist turn, attend daily service, go to confession regularly, decorate their rooms in the Gothic style, fast twice in the week, and receive curates to afternoon tea. They have always a list of little vagrants for domestic service, can tell what the anthem will be at St. Andrew's next Sunday, refuse dinner parties in Lent, are fond of dancing, and occasionally carry on very serious flirtations. Indeed all independents are rather given this way. They like to have handsome men at their entertainments, and retain a tame cousin or two for general purposes. He has to see people to the door, to provide bouquets, and be a butt when they want to abuse mankind. They sneer habitually at matrimony as another name for slavery, yet recklessly spoil and pet all the children they know. They have, indeed, troops of admirers, and many a girl who would like very much to be

married envies them the numerous proposals they receive. Sometimes they talk vaguely of the chances of happiness in married life, and occasionally go so far as to hint that they think one day of setting up a husband "just to run messages and black the boots, you know."

## MOCK MOTHERS.

There are few young men of culture and refinement with a disposition at once enthusiastic and sympathetic, who do not at some time of their lives fall under the dominion of a woman much older than themselves. Sometimes it is a sister or a cousin, sometimes a friend with whom they have been on intimate terms from childhood. More often it is a person whom they meet by accident under special circumstances, when a vivid impression is made, which becomes intensified upon closer acquaintanceship. Generally the lady is married, or an invalid, or of high rank ; but in some way she is, or seems to be, unattainable as a wife, and must therefore assume the *rôle* of motherly friendship. The effect a spiritual mother manages to produce upon the character and ultimate career of her adopted son is much greater than that possible to many wives.

The influence which a beautiful, clever, and accomplished woman of the world can acquire over a young inexperienced man is not surprising, but to lookers-on it is sometimes difficult to understand how an apparently commonplace woman can guide and control the intellectual life of a man infinitely her superior in every way. Those who have not fallen under the spell find no particular charm in her society, no originality in her conversation, no beauty in her person ; nevertheless, she has the power to mould

a mind stronger than her own, and to give a life-long bent to talents entirely beyond the sphere of her comprehension. It is the good fortune of some young men to be taken up early in life by a noble and pure woman, whom to know intimately is to worship, who for ever makes sacred to them the ideal of womanhood, and whose house is their refuge alike from solitude and temptation. She sends her adopted sons into battle with the red cross embroidered on their shield rather than with a pearl-studded manche in their helmet. With good reason they may afterwards arise and call her blessed. She is to them the "interpreter between God and men.

Too often, however, the assumed relationship of maternity is only a veil to cover selfish vanity or sentimental love-making. It is a convenient and apparently harmless amusement to patronise a young man, and provide him in a strange land with a house where he can feel at home. An idle married woman who does not care for her husband, who either has no children or else takes no interest in them, must have something to give flavour to life. Take the case of a woman who has risen from the ranks, and attained that social position which the judicious expenditure of a large fortune can generally give, at least in London. She must take up some line to make her footing secure. She must discover a rising star in art, science, or literature, and bring him before the public. Perhaps she succeeds in persuading herself that the passion of her life is for music. She is utterly ignorant of the subject, and without any natural taste ; but meeting by chance at an evening party a youth with long hair and nimble fingers, she decides he is the composer of the future, and invites him to her "at home." Finding him even more eccentric than she could have hoped, he is at once adopted as a child of the house, and given a footstool

at his new mother's knee. He comes after breakfast, and remains to lunch. The silent and long-suffering husband, who expresses towards him no paternal feelings, is compelled to retire to the club whilst his wife play duets with the rising genius. True, the poor youth has a certain fatal facility, and can ring changes on a feeble motivo, with a dexterous accompaniment formed out of the common chord. But his compositions, though numerous, are always slightly incoherent. There seems no particular reason why they ever begin, why they should ever end, nor why they should be counted as compositions at all. They seem all to be studies of chords or sequences from various haphazard points of view. Here and there a truly sweet little air is commenced, but it vanishes unfinished, and the attentive listener is saddened by his ears nearly as much as is the critic by his eyes on beholding the rough sketches of a deceased artist of promise. Nothing is finished, nothing complete; there is a certain amount of talent, but no industry; there is fancy, but it ends in failure. But the adopted mother sees nothing of this. She hears a pleasant jingle, and is more than satisfied. She talks of heaven-sent originality, poetic touch, thrilling tones. Then she begs him to play over again that air for the left hand. As he looks up from the piano, he sees her sitting spell-bound on the sofa. She is in a morning-dress of white muslin, evidently not donned from vanity, for nothing could well be more unbecoming to her portly form. She rises with a deep-drawn sigh, and declares that sooner than believe a talent like his can be wasted, she will renounce her belief in a future state of existence. She startles him; but being mystical and impressionable as an imperfect musician must needs be, he rises to the occasion, and endeavours to refresh her religious belief by a slight sketch of his own. A new mission presents itself. She must save her dear boy's

soul, if any one has a soul, which she very much doubts. He must come daily and spend the morning beside her at the piano. She buys his "Hymn to Sardanapalus," and invites him to her grand evening entertainments to play the accompaniments. Afterwards, when he is very tired, he is allowed to improvise on the airs of the latest Opera Bouffe, and, as a great treat, to give a rendering of his oratorio "Og, King of Bashan," composed to be played on the organ in the Albert Hall. Next morning she tells him that she alone can understand his yearnings and his genius; that she, too, has inspirations which none but he can comprehend, and then only through the love he has for her. Hereupon a great horror seizes him, for her manner is more than maternal. The poor young musician, being secretly madly in love with a German princess, whom he saw when on a pilgrimage to Vienna, recoils, and taking up his hat in his bewilderment, thinking it is his roll of music, tries to stuff it into his pocket and get out of the room. His want of presence of mind leaves him an orphan. His hopes are gone, his only chance of patronage withdrawn, and if he can get the post of organist in some obscure county town, and keep himself from starving, it will be the future limit of his ambition.

A young artist is peculiarly liable to become the victim of adoption. He is, perhaps, delicate, and never been to a public school, but has remained in a retired country home to be exhibited as a genius, and allowed to moon away his time on reading as desultory and aimless as his sketching. At last his father reluctantly perceives that while the other boys with no special ability but hard work are making their way in the world, the genius cannot earn five pounds in the open market. It is decided to send him to London to study. If he is handsome, has got some good introductions, and can talk graceful æsthetic nonsense,



he is sure to find an artistic mother. His fate is then decided. If she is kind and practical, a true lover of art, with natural and educated taste, she will soon discover if he has real genius, and foster it by helping him to work hard. If she merely belongs to the class of women, now so common, who affect art as they do trains or high-heels, he had better take to house-painting and die of the effects of white lead. A foolish and selfish woman who takes up what she supposes to be a rising genius, begins by fostering his vanity and instilling into his mind that it is not the least consequence when his pictures are not hung, indeed, rather a matter for boasting, as all exhibitions are unfairly managed. She discourages him from attempting to enter the great public schools of art, fearful of the effects of defeat, not so much upon him as upon her, or upon her estimate of him. This she can easily do by disparaging the opinions of the judges upon his drawings, by telling him that, after all, drawing correct anatomy, scientific light and shade are only accessories of true art, that Giotto and Blake did very well without them, and that the meaning—the deep, mysterious, poetical meaning—which he can throw into his work appeals to her inmost soul far better without such vulgar adjuncts. In short, partly through her own vanity, partly through a certain unquestionable desire to save him from painful excitement or suspense, she gradually withdraws him from all that healthy competition which forms the life of successful men, and casts over him a network of nervous sloth, which she teaches him to mistake for mental delicacy and poetic sensitiveness. He cares little for the criticisms of candid friends, or the sneers of unsympathizing relatives. True, he can hardly earn a living, but the world has never appreciated true genius; he prefers that his works should not be profaned by the vulgar gaze; and, even when some feeling of dismay at his

ruined prospects might rouse him to a wiser course, his mock mother keeps up his spirits by the whispered promise of appreciation by a more discriminating posterity.

When a youth of good feelings, but untrained intellect, comes under the dominion of a silly woman, who flatters his vanity and nurses his colds, who has sufficient cleverness to talk about everything and not sufficient interest in anything to wish to know more than the smattering needed for small talk, his position is perilous. The influence brought to bear on him has all the effect of paralysis. Perhaps he is trying to make his fortune by literature, and has lost his own mother at so early an age that he does not know what a mother should be like—somebody very kind, he supposes ; indulgent of whims, and careful of buttons ; perhaps rather strict about the eating of puddings or the colour of his necktie. The woman who now adopts him is all this, but she is also more. She undertakes the duty of forming his mind as well as of mending his gloves. She is ambitious of a literary fame for him, but is quite unconscious that even genius must submit to hard work. She prefers that he should read Shelley to her by the fireside rather than that he should work by himself at the Museum ; and when he writes poetry in halting metre and false rhymes, tells him that real soul-stirring poems, the language of the wounded heart, the yearnings of the soaring spirit, require no such ornaments, and scorn all such trammels. She smiles approval when he talks of dashing off an article ; and if it is, or rather when it is, rejected, consoles him for a disappointment by hinting that it has never been read, and by accusing all editors of venality. If he does obtain employment, she professes to admire the ease with which he writes, talks disparagingly of plodders, and forces him to put an absurd value on his work. When these tactics end in

a remonstrance from his employers, she urges him to defy them, tells him they would "grind his bones to make their bread," that it is better to be free and poor than to labour in slavery and chain his genius, until at last he finds he has frittered away any reputation with which he may have begun, that editors and publishers avoid him, and that he is probably involved in the cost of more than one unsuccessful volume which he has been vain enough to bring out at his own expense. It is well, too, if his moral as well as his intellectual nature is not perverted. He has ceased to see that the world pays an outward homage to morality, and that to outrage it, even innocently, is reprehensible. He openly talks atheism, or communism, or free marriage, until his friends are forced to forbid him their houses. He knows that at one house he is always welcome and may say what he likes. Inordinate vanity is fostered till it grows into defiance of all restraint, disgust at the laws and usages of society, and a feeling of wounded self-love which vents itself in complaints of the cruelty of the world, the tyranny of custom, and the stupidity of people who cannot recognise genius.

## INNOCENCE.

There is something so charming in innocence that we are apt to overlook its inconveniences and its dangers. To be innocent is to require perpetual protection and attendance, and to be constantly exposed to the machinations of ill-disposed people. Hence innocence so often figures as injured, and prosaic folk are disposed to look upon it as something very like a vice. We should object to a trial of our national morals such as was implied in the lady's walk

bedecked in jewels "rich and rare" through the dominions of King Brien. If she escaped uninjured it was more than she deserved. There are few things more offensive in modern society than the excessive parade of a false innocence which is only ignorance, and which goes about tempting the weak principles of the unregenerate. The old hagiologists missed the point when they made St. Anthony able to resist the charms of a beautiful devil. But when Goethe adds innocence to the charms of the tempter, Faust succumbs to an influence which might as easily have vanquished the hermit. The thing is reduced to an absurdity when we reflect that to be innocent in the ideal sense it is needful to be young also, and that "innocent" is the Irish or Scotch for an idiot. This ideal simplicity requires the country for its proper display, and is as much out of place in town as would be a grazing-meadow in Regent Street. It is impossible in town, not only because of the difficulty of preserving it but because its charming possessor could not be trusted out of sight, and would require whenever she took her walks abroad the attendance of a policeman, and the addition of a pair of wipers to her ordinary costume. Perhaps the brazen or golden ornaments which in the Low Countries some peasant-women wear at the sides of their eyes take their rise from such a theory of innocence in the early days of the race. We had once the happiness to know a man who openly declared his intention of marrying a young lady who wore spectacles, in order to see, as he said, what it would be like; but he too may have thought that nearsightedness and the wearing of artificial aids to vision would go to the increase of that innocence which he professed to admire. It is a question how far men really do admire innocence. The man who ventures to flirt with an innocent girl does so, as he

is aware, at great personal risk. He never knows where she may take him in. He cannot tell when she is serious and when she is in fun, and if he finds any charm in the pursuit, it is that which most men feel in a dangerous adventure. He cannot help constantly fancying that she holds up a mask to disguise her real features, and expecting the mask to be withdrawn, he is carried away in spite of himself from step to step until he cannot retreat. In fact, he cannot believe in the reality of her innocence till it has been removed, and the consequences of its removal are frequently fatal to the happiness of both parties. It is in this way that men make foolish engagements, too often with girls for whom they care but little, and life-long regret, coupled with domestic discord, conjugal indifference, and hundreds of other attendant woes, may too often follow upon a so-called "innocent flirtation."

The true country innocent is a production probably peculiar to our nation and time. She does not exist except in England and in some parts of North America. She has not existed even here until lately. Public sights, modes of speech, habits of thought, would have made her impossible a hundred years ago; for even *Clarissa Harlowe* was not innocent according to the modern pattern. She may often be, and sometimes doubtless is, absolutely pure in mind and idea. She knows no evil and thinks none. She is given to blushing, not so much at what is naughty, for that conveys no idea to her mind, as at anything like personal or direct reference to herself, her looks, her accent, her gait, her dress, or her opinion. She is not stupid, for stupidity almost implies ill-nature, and ill-nature is incompatible with innocence. On the contrary, she is very wide awake, very sensitive, and has, except in matters of right and wrong, about which she knows nothing, a very

sound judgment. She pays you little attentions without meaning or effort, remembers whether you take sugar in your tea, what songs you prefer, and how long ago it is to a day since your last visit. She has not the slightest objection to button your gloves for you—why not? She will put a rose in your coat, and will remember which rose you like best. She will take your arm on the gravel, and sit beside you in the arbour. If your flirtation with her has advanced but a little way, she will openly lay little plots for eluding mamma's vigilance at the picnic, and will beg to sit beside you on the box of the drag. She loves to practise dancing steps with your arm round her waist, and will let you correct her sketches over her shoulder. Unconscious of there being anything odd about it, she will go out with you to see the moon, and will laugh heartily as you tempt her to defy the summons of the prayer-bell. In all this she may not have the slightest wish to catch you, and when you propose to her she has not the vaguest idea whether she is in love with you or not. Probably she is startled to hear you talk of such a thing, and if you ask her directly will refuse you without hesitation; but the chances are that before you have been long absent she finds her error, and repents when it is too late. Once you break away, her influence is in all probability gone, but should you return to your devotion she will accept you at once, and will confide to you without hesitation that she is quite surprised to find how much she likes love-making. But the country innocent is exposed oftentimes to a different kind of danger in matrimony. She is very likely to accept the first offer she gets, and to marry a man merely because she is asked to do so. A short acquaintance suffices for such a match. She is as indifferent to her lover as she can be to a man who has paid her the compliment of wishing to make her



his wife, and she surrenders herself without a second thought. Her life must afterwards be full of strange awakenings, but unless when she knows what love is she should fail to fall in love with her husband, it need not be an unhappy one. The married innocent is not so much exposed as her unmarried sister to the wiles of Satan, and may continue to carry about with her to the end of her life some fragrance of the paradise from which she came out.

That the modern father should bring up his daughters in this kind of way is very marvellous. He must know that the isolation of the country life cannot last for ever, that indeed it is not desirable it should do so. Such a father would cry out in horror at the idea of teaching his girls the most rudimentary principles of physiology, and would be shocked to find that they read *Adam Bede*. Yet he cannot guard them from the knowledge of the village or parish gossip, and any newspaper may reveal to them all the abominations of our social life. If he can keep them from curiosity as well as from scandal, and can Bowdlerize the Bible and English History as well as Shakspeare it is well. But if he succeeds in this all but impossible task, it is only to leave them exposed to temptations of which they know nothing, bound hand and foot by an ignorance of vice. When it is presented to them, they do not recognise it, and fall into any trap that may be laid for them. When the parental care is withdrawn they are without any safeguard. They can have no conscience about breaking commandments of whose meaning they are ignorant, and every one knows among the circle of his fast acquaintances young ladies who, having been brought up in the strictest of family circles, welcome emancipation with an ardour which is incompatible with dignity or even with true purity. Ignorance is not principle, nor, on the other hand, is knowledge



guilt ; but it is too late to inculcate virtue when the pleasantness of wickedness has been inadvertently tasted. Once the passions have been aroused, it is ridiculous to talk of abstract virtue, and there is nothing for it but to fall back on prudence. Such are the morals taught without intending it by parents who fancy that ignorance and innocence go hand in hand. Ladies who visit the poor and nurse the sick are not the less models of purity and true innocence. They are not ignorant of the misery, and even the vice, of those to whom they are so kind. They go through it unscathed ; not even the smell of fire has passed upon them. But to reach their elevation it is necessary that the modern and, so to speak, bucolic ideal of innocence should have been cast aside. It is not for all to nurse or visit. But no woman can be the worse for a comprehension of the wickedness of vulgar vice, any more than for sympathy with pain and want. A little knowledge on forbidden subjects is not, in the nature of things, to be kept out of young minds. The gossip of the nursery sets little minds speculating, and reveals many things they need never know. It would be better if children could be kept free from all contamination ; but where is that possible ? Certainly not where they are left to the society of servants, who, let them be ever so moral and proper themselves, have friends and relations to whom morality is a laughing-stock. As they grow older their heads are filled with longing wonder to pry into the mysteries of life. That secrets have been carefully kept from them they know, but they have no notion of their true nature. Their ideas of immorality are confined to lying, stealing, disobedience, impiety, and such like. Of the ordinary sins of society they know nothing, and there is no occasion that they should know anything positive. There is no need to give a young person the Newgate Calendar in order to make him or

her avoid the crimes depicted therein. But a very different kind of knowledge might very well be supplied to them—knowledge that would not injure their purity in the least, but in reality strengthen and guard it. The sins of young people are more often sins of ignorance than of wilfulness. They do not know what they are doing; and so when temptation comes to them they fall an easy prey, and the annals of our social life are enriched year by year with the stories of young people gone astray who never intended, even to the last, to go astray, and whose faults are caused rather by an excessive than by a deficient innocence. We do not wish to see our girls brought up anatomists or lawyers, but it may be questioned whether we are right in keeping them quite in the dark until they are ready to be launched into the full light of modern life to find the way for themselves, dazzled and confused by what they see around them. It may be a question whether, for the sake of securing the very transient charm of modern innocence—a charm only accordant with extreme youth—it is worth while to expose our children to the dangerous results of that blind ignorance on which only it can be founded.



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## MRS. LEO HUNTER'S HUSBAND.

MANY clever women wish to form what they probably term a "salon"—that is, a place where learned, wise, amusing, and handsome people may meet to talk, to play, or to look nice. This is not of necessity an unworthy ambition. There may be no desire for adulation, no wish to shine by a borrowed light. The enterprising lady of the house may take a genuine and enlightened interest in great subjects. Even though she is herself perhaps selfish and vain, she is not thereby blinded to the selfishness and vanity of others, and may take a pleasure in studying the weaknesses as well as the perfections of great folk, and may find an innocent enjoyment in bringing them together to cultivate each other's acquaintance, to discuss the questions of the day, and to expand under the genial influence of appreciation. It is no easy undertaking to organize and carry on a successful drawing-room of this kind. The Englishwoman of the present is hardly equal to the task. There are no Lady Hollands, few Miss Berrys, among us. A variety of qualifications are now necessary, and not many modern ladies possess them. Time was that such a clever dame as Mrs. Montagu could assemble other clever people about her. The mere fact that she was "blue" made her curious and worth seeing herself. But now something more than wisdom in a hostess is required. When every second lady is learned there is more sameness among hostesses, and a combination

of rank with cleverness is almost indispensable. These difficult conditions are not often fulfilled, and London would remain without many such social centres were not extraordinary forces called into play. It was hoped some years ago when a lady of the most exalted rank, and it was understood of genius only second to her station, married a young statesman of literary tastes, that their house would be made a second Hotel Rambouillet. It was indeed given out by the friends of the newly-married pair that some such circle would at once be formed ; and as a matter of fact a considerable number of the upper ranks in literature and art received invitations. Unfortunately however those who attended once came not again. Strict etiquette and Court ceremonial are not favourable to the display of playful wit. It takes long practice for philosophers to be comfortable in knee-breeches and silk stockings. Men accustomed to dressing-gowns and slippers and the easiest of arm-chairs could not be induced to stand all the evening for the sake of three words amid solemn silence from their hostess. So the hopes of sociable artists and writers died down, much as they did thirty years ago when similar announcements were made about Prince Albert, and when a *Soirée* at the Society of Arts was decimated for the sake of Court dress ; nay, the story goes, for Court mourning. Our Royal Family have had to fall back upon South Kensington and foreign artists, and the British lion is still at the mercy of Mrs. Leo Hunter and her husband, for the help of the husband has become necessary. He must supply what she needs, and above all he must pay the bill and that too with at least an appearance of willingness. His supplemental energies must be exerted to the utmost to keep up the due succession at his wife's Evenings. He must not be too learned or too witty himself, but he must be capable of appreciating at

their right value the wisdom and humour of the men he meets in the world. It is wise not to have any peculiar or dominating taste, lest the captures should run too much in one line. He must not be exclusively given to art or religion or the theatre or science; but must be able to know, as by instinct, a great man when he sees him, to mark down his prey, and by carefully-laid approaches creep close and bring him in. Some men are lukewarm in the sport. They grant their wives a great man now and then as they would give them a box at the opera or a flounce of lace. But such men are not of the right kind. They are thrown away upon their wives, and can become nothing more than the male heads of second-rate houses, where in a large assembly only one or two real celebrities are found, and where it is only by vehement assertions that the eminence of two-thirds of the company can be attested. The thorough Hunter must be both tolerant and hospitable. He must not grudge his old wine to the great Tomkins, who talks openly of loving small beer. He must offer his best havannahs to the great Maulstick, who smokes a short clay. He must suppress his best story lest it should cap the poor one of a distinguished novelist. He may prefer archæological company or be bored by naturalists; he may hate artists' manners and think no explorer a gentleman; he may be interested in mathematics and think little of theology; but he must suppress all such leanings, be catholic in his religious views, ignorant of the rule of three, fully acquainted with the merits of Taddeo Gaddi, ready to rub noses with a tame Eskimo, acquainted with the vertebral arrangements of the radiata, and ready to side alternately with Cromwell and Charles I.

To a man of this impartial character nothing is impossible. He will spend three precious afternoons at his club discussing fluxions with a philosopher that

on the fourth he may carry him captive to the boudoir of his wife. He will break the Sabbath week after week to bring home one day in triumph the artist who opens his studio only on Sunday. He belongs to half a dozen clubs, literary and political, and infests them all. He subscribes to all the learned societies, and can write an alphabet of letters after his name. He has sittings in six churches of different schools of Christianity, and attends besides a synagogue and a lecture-hall. A hundred a year judiciously spent in subscribing to charitable funds makes him a member of many committees where he may meet with ministers out of office and even attain a bowing acquaintance with a duke and several baronets. The Zoological and Botanical Gardens are productive hunting-grounds, and, during archæological congresses in the country a stray grandee may be picked up at his own table. In fact, the wise husband will endeavour as early as possible to get up an interest in his wife's ambition, and to use all his pursuits as auxiliary to the grand pursuit of all. To such a wary Hunter the surliest lion falls a prey, the most savage old celebrity finds himself caught and caged for exhibition. Mr. Hunter knows that all men have their little weaknesses and endeavours to find out what they are. The radical essayist is hooked by an invitation to meet an earl. The German pianist cannot resist venison. The new R.A. is a flirt and Miss Leo Hunter is beautiful. The great MacPherson cannot find good Scotch whisky in London, Mr. Leo Hunter has it from a private still in the Highlands. The interpreter of hieroglyphics sings sentimental songs, but only at the Hunters is he pressed to do so. The eminent Calvinist from North America is caught by a quiet game of whist, the immortal poet by a pinch of snuff, the great moralist by the loan of a sovereign.

But it is during his autumn tour that Mr. Hunter is



able to spread his nets with the greatest success. He stocks his travelling-bag with useful articles—Who knows what may be wanted and by whom? What other tourists always forget he makes it his duty to remember. He knows the height of Mont Blanc to a decimal, the hour at which the train leaves Cologne, the distance from Rimini to Ravenna, the names of the three last Popes, and the current rates of exchange on London. His luncheon-basket is filled with the latest pottings and pies. Young ladies, even those of the highest rank, may be seized with hunger in remote places. The most independent of M.P.s may be induced to take a glass of Moselle. The offer of a sandwich may secure for the winter an acquaintance with a future Chancellor. And, if Mr. Hunter is wise, he has files of the *Times* and the weekly papers to meet him at all his stopping-places, however far they be from the nearest newsman. He finds them invaluable aids in thawing reserve and softening British exclusiveness. When he reaches a hotel he scans the list of arrivals carefully, and if he hears any one complain of the elevation of his apartment finds out his name before he offers so good-naturedly to change with him. It is, however in the minor attentions that he excels. He has caught the historian with the timely loan of a button-hook, and the great evangelical preacher with a light for his pipe. The dear duchess is overcome by the use of his dressing-case as a footstool on the deck, and the star of next season's opera is secured by the opportune offer of a big pin. He is invaluable on archæological excursions where he knows everybody and who their grandmother was, and has always a carriage and pair in perpetual pay. He has an extra seat to offer the elderly antiquarian who has forgotten his ticket, and perhaps entertains a lion unawares. But in truth the most accidental opportunity of making a valuable



acquaintance can hardly be called an accident to him, since he has calculated on it or something like it. How patiently he bears the rudeness of some great Celtic scholar, how pleased he looks when the president turns his back on him, how willingly he lets the brilliant young wits make fun of him! He takes infinite trouble to attain an infinitesimal result and has his reward when he presents his latest captive to his wife in the look of approbation which meets and responds to his own feelings of triumph. Such men are useful no doubt. They sometimes bring unnoticed genius into the light and occasionally help an unsuccessful artist or author; but such good deeds are done by chance or by stealth. Their true function is to spread reputations already made, and they may often enable the great men whom they alternately patronize and adulate to realize the eminence at which, by hard toil, they have at length arrived. But a "salon" founded in this way comes to nothing, and is not in any sense what is wanted—a place where the sketch of the great picture for next year's Academy would receive its due criticism, where the last new poem would be read in manuscript, where the sculptor would show his plaster model and the novelist recite a story. Such a place would have to grow, not to be made. The conditions of success are perhaps unattainable. Our late dinner, which is transferring to the newly fashionable "breakfast" much of its importance, precludes the possibility of such meetings in the evening. A quiet pipe by the fireside of a snug library or studio offers attractions to the contemporary lion which he can seldom resist.

## PRETTY PARVENUES.

In all ages there are to be found Lords of Burleigh and King Cophetuas, men whose love is greater than their prudence or their caste prejudices. We do not now call the people they marry "beggar-maids," so not having a polite epithet in our own language we must borrow one from the French and speak of them as parvenues. It would need half-a-dozen words to name the different types to be met with in society. They are well worth studying, and will repay minute analysis from the curiously different lines they take. There is the Lady Teazle type, one of the best known; a country maiden married for her simplicity, not bad at heart, but carried away into the open sea of frivolity by the newly-tasted pleasures of a town-life, and the hitherto unknown temptation of having money to spend. There is the girl who at once identifies herself with her husband, and talks of her family tree as if she had one. There is another little nobody, who marries the last heir of an old house with heirlooms from Agincourt. She hates the family portraits, because they reproach her with her own nameless origin. They are sent from the dining-room to the corridors. She takes down the dingy tapestry, and replaces it with watered pink wall-paper. She turns the old pleasaunce into a ribbon border, and has the yew hedges grubbed up. The ancient bedsteads and oak cabinets are sent to the auction-room, and the rooms furnished with mirrors framed in fern-leaves and chairs covered in gaudy satins. The mullioned windows are filled with plate-glass instead of lattices, and French novels occupy the bookshelves where the old calf bindings so long have shown their quiet backs. But we do not like applying the word parvenue, which implies a certain amount of

contempt, to one of nature's gentlewomen, however different may be the position she has attained from that which her parents may occupy. Her aristocracy is as real as if her ancestors had come over with the Conqueror, and she will fill her place, be it high or lowly, with a noble and kindly dignity. Her delicately organized constitution will enable her to be polite, for she will be sensitive about giving pain, and will always feel instinctively what is the gracious thing to do. She will treat old age with the respect which is due to it, and be ready to sympathize with the pleasures of childhood. In short, she will have the good manners and nice perceptions which ought to belong to a person of gentle birth and education.

The ordinary parvenue has none of this. She is alternately aggressive and ill at ease. She is almost sure to be over-dressed, and to be always occupied in thinking how she looks. A pretty girl, a labourer's daughter, who had just married a rich farmer, was at a yeomanry ball one very hot evening in summer. She was dressed in a gorgeous blue moiré antique with an immense train. An officer with whom she was dancing condoled with her upon the heat of the weather, but hinted that her dress was scarcely suitable for much violent exertion. To his horror and the amusement of his brother officers she insisted upon entering into the most minute particulars as to what special undergarments she had discarded in order to be able to wear her marriage gown and thus do honour to the occasion. When he took her in to supper, instead of eating a hearty meal as he had anticipated, she could not be induced to have anything but a little champagne. At last she allowed some grapes to be put upon her plate; instead of eating them, she sat looking distressed and uncomfortable. Her partner inquired if he could get anything else she would like better; was she faint? should he fan her? But no,

she would not have anything, and sat looking miserable. At last a gleam of intelligence shot across her face, and making a long arm, she seized a large gravy spoon which she had discovered at the other side of the table, and was soon attacking her grapes with complacency and self-satisfaction. No doubt her husband had impressed on her mind certain etiquettes that she was to observe, and had cautioned her before starting and said, Mind you don't touch anything with your fingers; gentlefolks never do. She presented an admirable picture of a certain type of parvenue about whom it is impossible to guess with any certainty what they will or will not say or do. They will not call a spade a spade when it is necessary, and yet they will talk about the most extraordinary things at the most extraordinary times when it is not the least necessary. They strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

A piece of advice often given to a girl when she marries and assumes a position to which she is unaccustomed is analogous to that tendered by the farmer to his wife. Some kind but injudicious friend impresses upon her that *sangfroid* and indifference are the qualities she ought to cultivate, that she must never allow anything to put her out in company, no matter what happens. This advice acted on by a pretty little parvenue of a naturally cold and selfish nature, is very apt to degenerate into what may very fairly be called insolence. She is obliged, for instance, to dine with people whom she does not like, and whose social position is not sufficiently above her own to command her respect. Under such circumstances she does not appear to advantage and is sure to make enemies. Arriving too late, and finding every one waiting, she scarcely apologizes, but seems to expect her hostess to be much obliged to her for remembering to come at all. If the gentleman who takes her down to dinner is not a person of sufficient importance for

her to wish to make an impression on him, she takes no trouble to respond to the polite attempts he makes at conversation, but leans back in her chair looking inexpressibly bored. She eats her food as if it were nasty, and drinks her wine as if it were medicine. She goes away as early as possible, taking care not to speak to any of the people whom she knows were asked to meet her. She makes no attempt to conceal how glad she is that the entertainment is over, and how much better pleased she would have been to have spent the evening elsewhere. When she gives a return dinner her behaviour as hostess is no better than it was as guest. She will invite a large party and not think it in the least necessary to be in the drawing-room when they arrive. Half-an-hour after the time dinner ought to be on the table she will sail into the room, her hair dressed in more than the height of the fashion, her heels taller than those promised to Haydn by Prince Esterhazy. She will not attempt any apology for her late appearance, but say with lofty indifference that she expects dinner to be ready sometime. Scarcely shaking hands with the ladies who have honoured her with their presence, and certainly wasting on them no little polite words of welcome, she will go and flirt languidly with some man who has made himself remarkable in society, and whom she has captured for her party. When at last dinner is announced, she has probably forgotten her husband's directions as to who was to be sent down with whom, so selects for herself the person most likely to amuse her, and pairs off the old gentleman whom she did not fancy to talk to with her school-girl sister. The present mode of sending people down to dinner is certainly not all that can be desired. It often prevents those who would enjoy each other's society most from sitting together, and keeps a clever but shy man silent,

because he has no small talk for a stupid old dowager with whom he is saddled. But if etiquette should change in this particular it will be in order to make society more agreeable, not merely to save trouble, to our insolent little hostess, who, when sitting at the head of her table, might just as well be alone, so little does she seem to remember any one but herself. Unaccustomed to entertain properly, she does not see when things are going wrong, and if she did, would not pretend to do so, nor try to remedy them. As to getting up from table, no pretty parvenue would ever think of doing such a thing, be the occasion ever so pressing; and as to handing a plate, such a piece of vulgarity she could never recover. Her idea of fine manners seems to be to sit still and let people take care of themselves. If she had arranged everything with forethought, and had servants to whom everything could safely be left, this would all be very well. As a rule, however, parvenues make bad housekeepers from ignorance, and bad mistresses from haughtiness. It is needless to say, the dinner-party is a failure unless the host is a host in himself, and looks after every one, making up in pretty speeches for his wife's want of attention.

Perhaps the unsuccessful dinner is followed by a reception. The hostess is tired, and receives her friends in a majestic manner, evidently wishing them to pass on as people do at a *levée*. She makes no attempt to introduce her guests to each other, or to try and get them to enjoy themselves. She has done them sufficient honour in allowing them to come and see how she is dressed, and how her rooms are decorated. A lover of pictures gazes longingly at an artist whom he knows by sight, and with whom he would give anything to have a talk. There are pretty girls and men who have plenty to say. There are clever girls and shy men who would not



object to a little intellectual flirtation. There are spiritualists longing to make each other's acquaintance and discuss the results of the last startling *séance*. There are materials for a pleasant social party. But the hostess, whose father would probably have slapped his guests on the back, told questionable stories, and tried to make his friends happy, sits on the stairs and flirts behind her fan. She says she has a headache, and no wonder, for she has not taken the pains to ventilate her rooms, and there is not the excitement of trying to make her party go off well to keep her up. Her indifference is a flaming sword which turns every way, and which allows no genial, kindly spirit to spread amongst her uncared-for guests.

Much to be preferred is the party given by the good-natured young parvenue who values her position most for the power it gives her to be hospitable and generous. Some young man may sneer and suggest that she should keep an extra housemaid to sweep up her h's, but she understands the meaning of the word *Salve*, and it is to be seen in her eyes as well as on the door-mat. She may too often mention her husband's vineries, but the bunches of grapes that grow there find their way to the poor and the sick. She may have a secret pleasure in seeing her name figure amongst peeresses on charity committees, but she does not forget her own poor relations. Her friends at twenty are her friends at fifty, and she does not attempt to conceal who her parents were. Her voice may be loud, but it says kindly things. She may dress in sky-blue and scarlet, but she would give away her cloak to any one in need of it. Of course there are ill-conditioned people who will go to her house and laugh at her, but she can afford to ignore their opinion, for her popularity is unassailable amongst those who know her well. She perhaps talks a little too much about "My carriages,



and my horses," but we forgive her, for she is always ready to take any old fright she knows out to drive, or to send somebody's children to the pantomime. Her manner may be a little coarse, but it is better than selfish indifference; her beauty may be of a vulgar order, but she is neither painted nor whitened, nor yet is her hair dyed golden. She is more agreeable than the mincing parvenue who tries to hide her provincial accent by screwing up her mouth, and her ignorance by going into raptures about art, who hops up and down upon her toes, and faints at the sight of an earwig.

### SUNDAY "AT HOMES."

It does not now follow of necessity that a lady is either a Jew, Turk, infidel, artist, or politician, if she intimates to her acquaintance that she receives on Sundays. There are people who do not perceive the incongruity of attending church in the morning and going to see their friends in a quiet way in the afternoon, any more than they can pretend to feel shocked at finding themselves drinking champagne at a wedding breakfast, immediately after the solemn service in which they have taken part. But, as a general rule there is a very perceptible difference between these Sunday gatherings and those of an ordinary week day. A dainty perfume of propriety meets you at the hall-door, and the step has not been soiled by the postman. The housemaid's young man, in green gloves and cuffs which nearly cover them, stands at the area gate tapping his boots with a toy cane, and nervously anxious to know if his beloved can get out. The milkwoman who is leaving the cream has lengthened her petticoats, and her secondhand bonnet is

surrounded by a wreath of wild roses. The knocker does not receive the same violent treatment to which it is accustomed on week-days, nor does the door fly open in the same sudden way. In the drawing-room the conversation turns rather upon the new Pope than the Congress. Among the guests there is sure to be a young lady with a Prayer-book in her hand; it has a cross outside, and somehow imparts to the room a flavour of the Ten Commandments. She has been to St. Timothy's, High Street, and talks gushingly of the anthem, praises with discrimination the singing of the new tenor, and speaks with feeling of the critical 'age at which the first treble has reluctantly arrived. Another lady has been sitting under a popular Broad Church preacher, and tells how he recommended the married ladies of his congregation to accomplish their fasting by getting up in time every morning to pour out their husband's coffee at breakfast and to cut his *Times*, and to try on Wednesdays and Fridays not to say anything unkind of their friends even if they are quite sure it is true. A budding young reformer comes in full of a lecture he has heard delivered by a journeyman carpenter, and insists on every one in the room signing a petition to have 'all public museums open on Sunday. He also gets up a subscription for the erection of Maypoles on those village greens which are so unfortunate as not to possess one. The children of the family are allowed to put in an appearance and sit apparently looking at their picture-books, but in reality making good use of their proverbially long ears. A good-natured old gentleman thinks it necessary to talk to them and make small and very stupid jokes which they fail to see; but they blush, so he thinks he has amused them, and is satisfied with himself. A long-haired terrier with preternaturally bright eyes sits in the corner and wags his tail excitedly whenever his master looks that way, each time hoping

that the recognition he receives is a signal for departure. When the children try to attract his attention he sidles away, still keeping his eyes steadfastly fixed on his proprietor. A gentleman whispers to his daughters that it is time to go home, which means that he wants to go to play billiards at his club. Some one remembers that she dines an hour earlier on Sunday to allow the servants to go to church, which they never do. There is some mild music, a sacred song or two, a little scandal with a flavour of religious animosity, and a few pieces of blue china handed round for admiration.

The pleasantest part of these Sunday afternoons at home is that one then meets the busy man who never dreams of paying visits on any other day of the week, but who does not mind, when taking a walk with his wife, dropping in to have a chat with a friend. In fact, there are good people who regard them as not altogether sinful, and an odd clergyman may occasionally be met with at some of them. There is little formality; people come and go, as if they were casual visitors, and the signs of preparation for a reception are not very apparent. Artists who work hard all the week sometimes open their studios to visitors on Sunday afternoons, and themselves go to see what other artists are doing. Painters who affect sacred subjects and those who preach high art as a kind of religion, may almost make it a matter of duty to hold these private shows; but their opinions have little influence on the majority of the sightseers, and only serve to make the mixture of company more heterogeneous. A certain hush prevails. Criticisms are passed in a whisper. If there is an altar-piece among the pictures it monopolizes the attention of the gazers, and subjects less appropriate to the day are only glanced at furtively. There are no seats, no refreshments are provided, and the assembly takes the whole exhibition as

if it formed part of a solemn ceremony or grand function.

The regular evening reception differs in many important respects from the ordinary Sunday afternoon at home. The ladies do not appear in bonnets, and most of the gentlemen are in evening dress. The greater number of the guests arrive in cabs, even though they possess carriages, as the coachman must be allowed time for the cultivation of the domestic virtues—virtues which the cabman is not supposed to possess. The cabman knocks at the door with unwonted hesitation, and eyes with a kind of displeased curiosity the fare he has brought. Though he never goes to church himself, he thinks gentlefolk should be there twice a day, if only by way of setting a good example to their young ones. The servant who opens the door looks gloomy. He evidently considers it a breach of privilege that he should be torn from the comforts of the housekeeper's room and the perusal of his sporting paper, as if it were any day in the week. The man who takes charge of the coats and hats does not condescend to speak, but performs his task with an air of condensed disapproval at such goings-on. The lady's-maid shows none of her usual cheerful alacrity in arranging the ladies' dresses, and smoothes out the most flowing train in a perfunctory manner and without any display of interest. Every one goes up stairs with a depressed expression, preceded by the butler, who looks more than ever like a Dissenting minister. He asks the names in a dignified and reproachful tone, and gives them out as if adding another and yet another to the lists of perdition. It is impossible not to see that he has views on the subject of Sunday observance. When two ladies come in, one of whom is from a well-brought-up country house, and hopes nobody sees her, it requires all the assurances of the other that things are not so bad as

they seem to induce her to enter the house. The ticket given for her cloak is almost too much for her feelings, and she would willingly stop the retreating cab and escape before the roof comes down. She ascends to the drawing-room with a feeble protest, but the sight of the other guests is calculated to encourage her. Everybody is in black or something like it, a few glaring exceptions only serving to bring out the fact. The hum of conversation is low and earnest; the laughter subdued and rare. The proportion of young people is small. Nearly all the ladies are married, and their husbands not far off. The company is composed of very various elements, and everybody eyes everybody else with undisguised curiosity. There is much questioning as to who is who; every one is surprised to see an acquaintance; and in this respect the party contains within itself an element of success, for the pleasure of seeing a friend is no doubt enhanced by unexpectedness. To hear the opening remarks of each conversation one might suppose that all the world was in the habit, except upon rare occasions, of performing their evening devotions and going to church twice on Sundays, if not oftener. It must be allowed that "You here!" is a better beginning for a conversation than any, even the most profound and scientific, meteorological remark. There is, however, a certain air of strongmindedness about the ladies in the room. That pretty girl in the corner, you are informed in an audible whisper, practises as a conveyancer. The lady beside her, to whom she is talking of the higher education, is a doctor. The tall woman in diamonds and dirty lace lectures on temperance; and that buxom widow, so becomingly dressed in a Mary Stuart cap, is president of a league for the emancipation of governesses. From the business-like and serious look on people's faces it might almost be imagined that a fashionable missionary

meeting was about to take place ; but such an impression is soon removed by the sound of the piano. It is in the music appropriate to these festivities that the observant stranger will seek for an indication of their actual character. It is always severely classical. Even Wagner, being operatic, seldom occurs. The exact place where the line is drawn cannot be easily found, but drawn it is. Psalms and hymns are as inadmissible as ballads. Handel is as little to be expected as Watts. But in Bach and the more abstruse aberrations of Beethoven the Sunday-going performer revels. Tune may perhaps mark the boundary. Nothing is allowed which can by any means be twisted into an air, and all tendencies to lapse into melody are sternly repressed. There is one great advantage in the use, on these occasions, of this kind of music. By the time a few bars have been played the desire to talk has become overpowering. The most silent people think of something they must say. In vain are the reproving eyes of the hostess turned upon the distant sofa. A man who never before in his life made or thought of making a joke is bursting with suppressed merriment. The religious moralist may perhaps be disposed to draw a lesson from this aspect of the Sunday party. He observes that those guests who do not understand classical music wear an air of constraint and unhappiness, and unless he is absorbed in an effort to pick up the "subject," he may take an opportunity of reflecting that even a sermon would be a preferable infliction to most of those present. It is quite as easy to look silently at one's friends in church, and anybody can join with interest in a revivalist or ritualist hymn. The intervals allowed for conversation are tantalizing in their brevity ; and it is noticed that the assembly is as much determined on breaking up before midnight as if it were Saturday and not Sunday.

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## AMATEUR NURSING.

AFFECTION only, however warm, will not qualify a sick-nurse. The cool head and steady hand of a professional stranger is too often to be preferred. Many a life has been sacrificed by ignorance or stupidity or anxiety where the nurse would gladly have died to save the patient. The event of a fever has before now been determined by the clapping of a door, or by an injudicious spoonful of unsuitable food. The indulgence may prove fatal of some whim which a fond mother cannot deny to her sick child. The longed-for change of posture may be accorded a day too soon. The cruel application of another blister may be put off a day too long. A moment's thorough draught, a cup of tea, a piece of news, a second pillow, may settle the struggle between life and death. How often the doctor leaves a house feeling that it is only in spite of the nursing that his patient will recover ! He shudders to think of the messes which will be brought up as beef-tea. He is in despair when a poultice is prescribed, as he is almost certain it will be so applied as to do more harm than good. And valuable as all kinds of baths are in illness, he dare not order them, knowing the insane way in which his orders will be carried out. Above all he is afraid of what may be termed the "cumulative dose," whether of medicine or nourishment ; and finds it impossible to persuade either the patient or his family that a half-a-dozen tablespoons of brandy in half-a-dozen



hours are not the same thing as one glass in six hours ; or that, where he orders medicine to be taken every two hours the effect will not be the same if a double or treble dose is taken at once to save trouble.

There is a strong and not altogether unreasonable prejudice against employing professional nurses, and especially hospital nurses, as long as the amateurs hold out. "Sisters" are resorted to now in many cases, but unfortunately there are benighted souls who do not like "Sisters," delightful as they are often found to be ; people who are puzzled about their position, like Lord Dundreary about Sam ; patients who associate them, perhaps not unnaturally, with confession and extreme unction. It is ill-naturedly said that, unless sisterhoods wore uniforms, ladies could not be found to go into them ; that the coffee-coloured or black dress, the becoming straw bonnet, and the silver crucifix have an effect on the female mind like that produced on every boy by the aspect of a life-guardsman in his panoply ; but it is certain that many sick people who have to submit to hired or professional nursing of any kind would prefer to see no white lawn or blue serge, no rosary or knotted cords. There is an opening for what may be called medical assistants to take a place between lady doctors and ordinary sick-nurses. They might be taken from the class which now supplies the suffering fellowship of governesses, already too numerous ; and from which companions who are no company are now drawn. They would require to have the keen perceptions and nice ways of ladies, yet they must not be above supplying all the patient's needs. Their training ought not to be made expensive, for women are apt in learning these things ; hands which could never play a sonata of Beethoven might adjust a bandage, and voices whose singing would be painful to hear might soothe the sick one's ear with kindly

words. Where the lady of the house is laid up such a nurse might answer her letters, see a visitor who called to inquire, read the newspaper intelligently, talk of something besides the dying agonies of her last case, and perhaps judge wisely when the patient must be kept quiet and when she may see a friend. Such a person could without offence dismiss a visitor who stayed too long, and assume the responsibility of allowing the children to see mamma, while she ordered their goings to prevent a racket or a cry.

But it is painful to see a patient nursed in the common manner. The tact required for a sick-room differs from all other kinds of experience. Amateur nurses seldom possess it. Now and then a lady is to the manner born, and without instruction or previous experience blossoms into a full-grown nurse at a moment's notice. The doctor who finds one ready in a house rejoices heartily. His own credit as well as the recovery of his patient is probably assured. Seldom, however, has he this good fortune. His ordinary experience is very different. If he wishes the sick-room kept at a certain temperature, he cannot have it managed. The fire is alternately half extinct and blazing up the chimney. There is no care to have it warm at sunrise and sunset, and moderate when the sun is shining and the air warm. The invalid is awakened from a priceless sleep by hearing the cinders fall on the unprotected fender, or by the noise of a clumsy hand putting on coals, which might easily have been wrapped in pieces of damp paper and left ready for noiseless use. The morning meal is perhaps delayed until the patient has passed from appetite to faintness. Perhaps, when it comes, the tea is smoked. Household troubles are freely discussed in the room. Mary has given warning because there is so much going up and down stairs since Missus was ill; the cook is extravagant, and yesterday's dinner was spoilt;

Johnny has cut his finger, and Lucy has tumbled down stairs. Such things are told as if they would amuse the invalid. But worse than this is the mysterious whispering at the door, and the secrets obviously kept to excite the nervous patient's suspicions. The irritating creak of a dry boot, the shuffling of a loose slipper, try a sick person's patience unreasonably; and the amateur nurse argues against such silly fancies, and thinks they are matters in which reasoning can be of no avail.

The untrained nurse never commences her arrangements for the night until the patient is just beginning to grow a little sleepy. She then arranges the pillows, moves chairs, stirs the fire, and perhaps makes up her own bed. Such fusses at sleeping-time produce fever in a most unaccountable way, and the amateur is amazed and bewildered because the patient lies awake all night. Besides all this, and no matter how noisy and elaborate the preparations for the night's campaign, several things are forgotten down stairs; no beef-tea is to be had in the middle of the night, no spoon for the medicine, no boiling water. Amateurs do not know that sick people should not be asked what they will have, but should be saved even the mental exertion of making a choice. However desirable it may be that they should arrange their affairs, business matters should not be discussed before them. Sometimes a man who has not made his will before his illness will be anxious and uneasy till he has made it, and will get better when the matter is off his mind. But to arrange such things requires nicety and tact such as the amateur who perhaps shares the sick man's anxiety cannot show.

In convalescence, even more than in illness, the attentions of an inexperienced nurse are often trying to the invalid. If he had not learned unquestioning obedience to a benevolent but irresponsible power,

he has many things to suffer before he gets well. At first, perhaps, he will be allowed to sit up hours when minutes were the doctor's orders. He is able to persuade his nurse to give him a tumbler of claret, when the medical allowance was a wine-glass. He is allowed to see the newspaper for a few minutes, and he reads an exciting novel. He is permitted to see a visitor, and has a room full of company. He is overloaded with muffling when he takes his first walk, and is allowed to sit on a cold garden-seat. When he goes home, no nourishment is ready for him, and the chances are his house clothes are unaired. And as he gradually emancipates himself from the bondage of illness, and returns to ordinary life, it is seldom that his reviving appetite is properly humoured. The *sequelæ*, as they are called, of many fevers are both induced and aggravated by the carelessness with which unwholesome food is offered to the recovering invalid. This is even more often the case where there is chronic illness or delicacy of constitution. It is amazing to see a man suffering from a deadly complaint set down to a dinner where he has to choose between stewed kidneys and salt beef. If he is cautious, which is not often the case, his hostess will wonder to see him prefer a bread-and-water diet. But the entire ignorance of what constitutes wholesomeness in food is a curious feature in the character of many housekeepers. In all diseases of the respiratory organs the importance of care in adjusting the temperature, especially at night, is seldom thought of; yet a little trouble taken in time has often saved a delicate constitution from falling into consumption. Even in a bad climate it is only by experience that any one can tell how far this terror of all families may be escaped. People are wholly demoralized by fear when its name is mentioned. Medical men who hesitate to use the word, knowing what despair it will lead to, are accused of deceit.

The frantic parent whose child is threatened tries all kinds of experiments, rushes wildly from place to place, consults all kinds of quacks, uses half-a-dozen methods of treatment, perhaps all at the same time, alternately keeps the patient constantly in the open air and secludes him altogether, and when the end, inevitable in such cases, comes at last, is subject to lifelong self-questionings as to whether anything more might have been done.

Some people, again, are never to be warned of danger until it is too late. The doctor's grave looks are unseen, his warnings unheeded, and then he has to bear the blame of the result. When a death occurs for the first time in a household, the calamity comes with a crushing force. Everybody is thrown off his balance; all kinds of reasons have to be invented for what is unfortunately a too common occurrence. The right reason is seldom thought of, for all that love and anxiety could do has been done. But the doctor requires something more, for love and anxiety are not always helps to him. A little exact and unreasoning obedience to his orders, a little disregard of the patient's morbid cravings, a complete absence of any display of nervousness or fear, and his patient's chances are doubled. It is a pity Mr. Ruskin has never turned his practical mind upon these matters. His Utopia is to consist only of young and healthy people; and in one of the recent numbers of *Fors Clavigera* he defines women's work without any reference to nursing. He says they are to please people, to feed them in dainty ways, to clothe them, to keep them orderly, and to teach them. He says not a word about nursing them in sickness; possibly he contemplates the institution of "Euthanasia."

## DISTRICT NURSING.

Years of suffering have not quenched Miss Nightingale's early enthusiasm. She has the same passionate interest in her old subject, the same determination to mitigate for others the pain which she bears with such unselfish fortitude. Confidently and eloquently she appeals to the public for help to establish a great National Nursing Association for the Poor. The prospectus of such an institution has been drawn up, and a Central Home started where already a beginning has been made. That Miss Nightingale should advocate the aims of the Society cannot fail to inspire confidence that it may become worthy of its name. When Miss Nightingale's public labours began we thought skilled nurses were only required for wounded soldiers. Mere fevers or epidemics, it was supposed, must run their course. Children came into the world and for the most part went out of it with only the assistance of Sarah Gamp. Those who walked the hospitals even twenty years ago have a lively recollection of the race of robust, hard-swearing charwomen, or worse, who were then dignified with the name of nurse. But we are now on all sides endeavouring to attain to ideal Hygeias. Correct statistics of the death-rate in different places enable us to put our finger on an unhealthy spot and insist upon investigations as to the cause of the mortality. We can now boast of crowded districts in London which are as healthy as most country parishes, and we can point to Bristol and Portsmouth as examples of successful sanitary reform. We no longer pity Salford and Newcastle for their unhealthiness; we reproach them for homicidal neglect. What has been accomplished during the last few years in the prevention of illness only shows us

how much more might have been done. The mortality of this country might still be largely reduced if we could ensure the enforcement of ascertained laws. And here lies the greatest difficulty of the hygienic reformer. He can prescribe, but who will administer his prescriptions? He can direct, but who will carry out his directions? The life may be saved by care, but who is to take the care? In surgical cases the hospital is no doubt the best resource of the sick poor. They have the most experienced physicians, and for the most part tolerably competent nurses. But there are even surgical cases which might with advantage be nursed at home, if there was any way of ensuring to the sufferer even a moderate amount of care and comfort.

It would be almost impossible for any one who had not visited among the London poor to realize the abject misery which illness produces in an airless, overcrowded room. There are thousands of struggling people who find it difficult at all times to keep their heads above water, to provide the barest necessities of life, and pay the week's lodging. Sickness is the last straw, the additional weight yet required to sink them into hopeless pauperism. In cases of fever it is a great matter to have such an institution as the Fever Hospital at Islington, where patients are kept until all fear of contagion is past. Isolation is always difficult in a town house. But in chronic diseases, or where it is only cold and neglect, which make a slight attack serious, it is often most desirable not to break up a home which it may never be possible to re-establish. The home may be a draughty garret or a damp cellar, and yet be a better place in which to bring up children than the workhouse. But a helping-hand is needed beyond what the district visitor is able to supply by her bread or meat tickets. Something more is required to help to convalescence than the bottle of



medicine from the dispensary. So long as the mother of a family is able to get about, things are not utterly hopeless unless she drinks. But when she is confined to bed and has several young children, the case becomes desperate and recovery very uncertain. Perhaps after a sleepless night she begins to doze as her husband rises to go to his work ; too often hardened by adversity he is careless of her sufferings ; but if he has come in sober the night before and has his faculties about him, he makes an awkward attempt to light the fire and put on the kettle before he tramps away. Then the children waken and want their breakfast. There is none prepared for them, the coals are not lighted, and they must be contented to gnaw a dry crust in the corner. In the bed beside the invalid is the baby wringing her nerves with a piteous unceasing wail ; her illness has robbed it of its proper food, and there is no money in the house to buy milk. The eldest girl does her best with slack and a bit of paper to rekindle the fire, and with vigorous use of the bellows the kettle boils at last. A new misery now arises in the danger lest she should pull it over and add a scalded foot to the other woes of the family. The mother listens to each step on the stairs, hoping perhaps some friendly neighbour will come and look after the little ones and raise her in the bed. But all of them have more to do than they can manage, and if a gossip knocks at the door to have a talk, she goes away again without interfering with the family arrangements. The children, unwashed, unkempt, half-fed, endanger their lives on the staircase, or add to their mother's anxieties by wandering about the streets. It is needless to follow the course of the weary day until the husband's return from his work, tired, and perhaps wet, no supper ready, everything wretched and in disorder. It is not surprising that he adjourns to the "Queen's Head," and reveals towards

midnight, by unsteady steps on the stairs and the thickened utterance of his many oaths, that the money for to-morrow's food has gone in betting and beer. By degrees everything is pawned, even to the blankets, and the invalid leaves the bare walls of what was once home either in the parish hearse or the workhouse van. It is not only amongst the abjectly poor that illness is so terrible a calamity, such a crushing misfortune. It is just as much felt in the home of the struggling tradesman, perhaps more. Thousands of valuable lives are sacrificed every year simply for want of proper nursing. The hard-working clerk with a large family might have lived to provide for all his children if the temperature of his room had been kept equable when he was laid up with bronchitis. The grocer at the corner would still be selling adulterated mustard if, when he was in rheumatic fever, proper nourishment had been given him throughout the night. The widow who was supporting her family respectably by dressmaking need not have left them orphans if a little care had been taken of her when she was recovering from diphtheria.

The National Nursing Association, fully alive to the present culpable waste of human life, propose to train and provide skilled nurses for the assistance of the sick poor in their own homes, and to establish a training school in connexion with one of the London hospitals. A beginning has been made, and a Central Home started in Bloomsbury Square ; others will be established by degrees in the different metropolitan districts, and the committee hope to extend their operations into the country as soon as funds are raised. The nurses are to be taken from the educated classes, to have comfortable homes provided for them, where they will have none of the cares of housekeeping, but be able to devote their time and talents entirely to their work. They must go through,

first, three months' probation, in order to find out if they are suitable candidates, then a year of hospital training, and thirdly three months of special instruction. The expenses incurred by the nurse amount to about fifty pounds during the time of training; she then gets a salary of thirty-five pounds a year, rising by three pounds per annum until it reaches fifty. Uniform is supplied and washing, so that she has only her personal expenses to provide for. It is particularly desired that the nurses may not be looked upon as almoners, as from workhouse and parish organization a sufficient supply of nourishment and other necessities may always be counted upon. Miss Nightingale points out that great care must be taken not to demoralize and pauperize families; that when a man is given to drink he may be induced to deny himself to help a sick wife; whereas, if everything is provided for her, he will only have additional temptations of self-indulgence. District nurses will necessarily be of a class superior even to those in a hospital, because it is necessary that they should be able to supplement in some degree the office of the doctor, and that too without the usual hospital appliances. It is requisite that they should be able to keep an accurate record of the pulse, temperature, and symptoms of the patient, so as to enable the doctor to know how and when to vary his treatment. Among her most important duties will be that of calling attention to the sanitary condition of the house. Dust-bins, water-cisterns, drains, must be all inspected and watched, and in cases of defective arrangements reports made to the proper authorities. This will be an arduous part of the work, as it is most difficult to cope with landlords and with the legal difficulties which constantly arise. It will not be easy to go into a man's house as a nurse, and not only to insist on his leaving it as soon

as possible, but also to take steps for having it shut up and pulled down. Even Miss Octavia Hill, with all her energy and resolution, finds such a task not without its difficulties.

The scheme which Miss Nightingale asks the public to support, and that generously, is evidently the result of much careful thought and wide experience of the sick. The arrangements made for the comfort of the nurses are wise and far-seeing; the limiting of their work to eight hours in the twenty-four is no doubt real economy, as it enables the staff in times of emergency to do much more than if they did not ordinarily get proper rest and recreation. The great question now to be solved is, not whether money will be forthcoming to carry out the establishment of a great national institution, nor whether the poor are willing to pay a small weekly sum for skilled nursing, but whether it will be possible to procure the raw material out of which Miss Nightingale's ideal nurses are to be manufactured in sufficient quantity to fill the places provided for them. She wants a refined educated gentlewoman, too much a lady to think any service she can render menial; with sufficient tact to steer clear of offending a most easily-offended class, and yet with determination enough to insist upon her reforms being carried out. This lady nurse must be strong enough to bear the most sickening smells, the most loathsome sights, the most agonized deathbeds, without being made ill by them. She must be brave enough not to be frightened at the abuse of a drunken man, or at having to walk through the streets alone at the dead of night. She must be a Sister of Mercy without her early training or her faith in works, a doctor without his pay, a sanitary inspector without his power, at once a servant and a teacher, a tender nurse and a strict disciplinarian.

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## SCHOOLS OF COOKERY.

It may fairly be questioned whether a practical knowledge of how to choose nourishing food and prepare it in a wholesome and economical manner would not be quite as valuable an acquirement to a girl belonging to the working classes as how to knit a stocking or make a shirt. This view does not, however, seem as yet to have presented itself to the heads of the Education Department, if we are to judge of their opinions by the tone of their subordinates. The Government inspectors, as a rule, put every obstacle they can in the way of those schools which have taken up cooking. We should have thought it would be much easier for them to hold an examination in pies and puddings than in cross-stitch and felling, and that they could more readily judge of the grilling of a herring than give an opinion upon the merits of a row of herring-bone. But so important a subject can scarcely be put aside because inspectors look coldly on everything outside the three R's. No doubt the time usually spent by children at school is so limited as to require the most careful husbandry ; but, on the other hand, the experience of most managers who have tried the experiment is that having variety in work stimulates the faculties and produces a more healthy and vigorous tone of mind. It is found that the time given to cooking, say two hours in the week, is easily made up, and that the girls so employed are not retarded in their general education. At the present moment, when the subject of cooking has taken

hold upon the public, and when numbers of people are ready to lend their aid if they only knew how, it is most desirable that, if Government intend that domestic economy should really be taught in Board Schools, they should at once collect information and organize some system likely to work. It would be no easy task, for the difficulties are considerable. They are not, however, more formidable than many others which have already been overcome. Perhaps to give briefly a few of the suggestions which have been made by practical workers in the field might be of interest to those who think, with Lord Beaconsfield, that "the health of a people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their power as a State depends."

The members of the School Board of Birmingham hope they see a way out of some of their present hindrances. They have sent up a memorial to head-quarters praying "that grants may be made on the results of instruction in practical cookery as a distinct subject, on the same principle upon which grants are now made to elementary schools through the Science and Art Department." The memorialists also ask for aid towards fitting up and furnishing places for practical instruction, and that teachers should be encouraged to pass special examinations with a view to the teaching of cookery. A private meeting was lately held by the representatives of some of the principal schools of cookery to discuss their difficulties, and see if any uniform system could be built up and worked out. Almost every question discussed seemed to turn more or less upon a knowledge of what steps, if any, the Education Department is going to take. They all, however, came to a resolution that it was their unanimous opinion that it would be most "advantageous for the promotion of the scientific teaching of cookery if 'food and its preparation' were added to the subjects

of examination conducted by the Science and Art Department." They thought that these examinations "would be of special advantage in connexion with the requirements of the Education Department in respect of domestic economy." Mr. Newton Price, whose own village school at Watford Heath has been such a marked success, seems to think that the first step ought to be a circular sent out from the Education Office defining, in very general terms, the work to be done. It might propose a best and second-best course, to be adopted according to local circumstances, and offer a grant on results. He is very much afraid of red tape, as almost every school would be a special case, and too much interference in minor arrangements might often mar all usefulness. Originality and invention should not be treated as high treason, but schools judged by results more than by the manner in which such results were attained. Mr. Price's scheme for holding an examination is certainly practical. He assumes that every man is a *gourmet* if he has only had the chance of cultivating a faculty which is innate in us all. The inspector might therefore be expected to be able to arrange a bill of fare from the course of dishes taught in the school. This selection would have to be made beforehand, so that the raw material might be provided. Let him on his arrival choose, without reference to the teacher, two or more girls to retire from the general examination to prepare his lunch. The morning's work would no doubt give him a sharp appetite and power to dispose of a sufficient number of dishes to test the ability of the little cooks. With regard to where the instruction of the children is to be carried on when there is no special building for the purpose, Mr. Price offers several suggestions. In some cases the schoolmistress's house might be had, in others the village club or reading-room, which is not generally used in the



day. Perhaps some old widow, to whom a shilling would be a consideration, might lend her cottage for two or three hours in the week. There is no doubt that the more nearly artisan teaching can be conducted amongst the usual conditions of the poor, the more likely it will be to be useful. Gas-stoves and copper pans should be used as little as possible, except in the teaching of the higher branches of the art.

If we now for a moment assume that all difficulties with regard to the Education Department were surmounted, that it was settled that cooking was to be placed on the same footing as needlework and separated from "clothing," supposing that the schools taking up the subject could earn four or even two shillings on each pupil passed, let us see next how and where are the teachers to be trained. Is South Kensington to be the great College whose diplomas are to be compulsory? If so, is it to be managed on the same principle as at present? It is no doubt very encouraging to be told by Sir Henry Cole that he loves the ladies, has always loved them, and would do anything for them. It may to certain people be highly complimentary to be slapped on the back by Mr. Buckmaster, and informed that, if they learn to make appetizing dishes, they will be sure to be able to secure husbands. There are some young women who no doubt appreciate a flirtation with the facetious Secretary in a back lobby, particularly as his time seems to hang heavily on his hands. But to the general public all these social charms of South Kensington are of little moment. They want their letters answered. They want trustworthy information and advice. They want to be sure of the efficiency and character of the teachers sent out. They want to know who gives the diplomas, and whether there is more than one person in the establishment who really understands cooking.

They would ask for some good reason why the school is closed now at the very time when teachers and pupil-teachers of Board and other Schools would most gladly avail themselves of some instruction during their holidays. They would like to know why, with the large fees charged, the school is not self-supporting. Sir Henry Cole says that everything is a question of money. It might be suggested that management, economy, and a judicious selection of officials were quite as important matters as subscriptions or ducal patronage. It may be found that practical cookery cannot at present be advantageously included in the national code of education. It is certainly not desirable to put more work on the teachers, who have already enough on their hands. There is, however, no reason why private enterprise should not establish a great network of schools all over the country, some stationary, some missionary. By dint of hard work, method, thrift, and careful attention to financial details, the Edinburgh School of Cookery finds itself at the end of two years with more than 1,000*l.* of actual earnings. This is independent of 600*l.* subscribed to start the work, which is deposited in bank to build new premises. These canny Scotch ladies have charged the smallest sum possible for admission to their lessons and for private classes. They have given instruction in out-of-the-way places, where profit could not be expected, making the money earned in one place supply the need of another. They have invented a flying *batterie de cuisine*, so that all the preparations required for their reception is a room and a connexion with the nearest gas-pipe. The indefatigable Secretary, if she were permitted, would include the elder boys in the School Board classes, and wishes to be ready to give lessons in the preparation of food to soldiers, sailors, and intending colonists, as well as to supply them with information as to the apparatus

and food material likely to be at their disposal in foreign countries. She further thinks that in University towns provision should be made for teaching sick-room cookery to medical students, and that at all times the school should be able to furnish information regarding the dietary and stoves suited for hospitals and other public institutions. Already, on two occasions, teachers have been called upon to give lessons on camp cookery, and in one village in Scotland the evening artisan class was chiefly composed of ploughmen from neighbouring bothies. The ladies of Edinburgh have formed a very high ideal of the training required for teachers, and their present fear is that, owing to the interest felt all over the country on the subject of cookery, inferior and half-trained persons may be sent out who will bring the movement into disrepute.

## PLAIN COOKS.

Wanted, an industrious, thrifty, sensible woman, who has some idea of cookery, who will do a little housework, clean her knives, and be content with the wages of a governess. The servants who now apply for such situations in middle-class households are for the most part wholly unfit for them. Sometimes they are kitchen-maids who have been under good cooks, but have been too lazy or too stupid to learn from them, and being generally without any ambition to rise in their profession they have abandoned all hope of ever earning high wages. Sometimes, again, they belong to a class of which the young or inexperienced housekeeper must beware. Its representative is usually an elderly woman of many places, who is destined to be in many more ; indeed she adds to their number almost every month, for drink, or laziness, or both,

will account for any frequency in her migrations. A third and more numerous class is that of the young woman who has been a maid-of-all-work. She has been ignorantly brought up, and her home training has been worse than none. She has seen waste when money and provisions were plenty, alternating with starvation, begging, and dishonesty when scarcity of work and drunkenness have made times hard. She has inhabited a crowded room where tidiness was impossible; her dress has consisted chiefly of rags, garnished with artificial flowers; her highest ideal of amusement has been a fair or a music-hall; and her only preparation for entering domestic service a few months at nominal wages in a lodging-house. There she has learnt little but peculation, and has been accustomed often to lie down at night in her clothes too weary to undress, and to rise in the morning and go about her work unwashed and uncombed. When the maid-of-all-work obtains a place as plain cook she assumes the reins of office with perfect self-satisfaction. She proceeds without any hesitation to waste and destroy the materials entrusted to her for conversion into food. It need hardly be observed that her success is complete. She keeps her milk and cream in the hot kitchen and wonders that they turn sour. She puts the butter into the same small cupboard with the cheese, and is surprised that the sauce which she sends to the dinner-table has an unpleasant taste. She will not be at the trouble of cleaning out the oven-flues, and cannot imagine why the paste will not rise. She leaves the fish upon the kitchen-table from the time it is brought until she is ready to cook it, and stands by with a look of innocence while the fishmonger is scolded for sending stale fish. When she lays a fire she crams it with bundles of wood so that it will not light, and supplements her bad architecture with whole boxes of matches and very long

candle-ends. She stirs the kitchen fire every time she passes it, and keeps it blazing even when there is no cooking to be done and when the family is dining out. If the heat makes her ill, she blames the poor accommodation of the house, and talks as if she had come from a palace to enter service. If she has a gas-stove the taps are constantly turned on, and as to lowering the lights in the passages or scullery, such an idea never crosses her mind even in dreams. She will send up the eggs either raw or hard-boiled rather than use your sand-glass. She will give you bread and milk with roast chicken rather than beat and flavour the mixture into bread sauce. She will make tea with tepid water, will send up spinach that looks like cabbage rather than put it through a sieve, and will peel the potatoes an inch thick to save the trouble of picking out their eyes.

Now really refined cooking is the result of practice and teaching. But, short of this, the genius which consists of "an infinite capacity for taking trouble" will do much for the production of food which shall be wholesome and palatable as well. This is exactly the quality deficient in an ordinary cook. Flavouring, frying, and making puff-paste are not to be learnt in a day, though common sense and the will to use it are enough for the preparation of an ordinary dinner. But the contemporary cook has only one recipe for every dish—namely, quantity and waste. She asks for a dozen eggs and a pint of cream for the simplest cabinet pudding, and prefers isinglass to gelatine only because it is more expensive. A whole pot of jam must be consumed to make a single tartlet. A joint in the kitchen and another in the parlour is the allowance she prescribes for every day. She never keeps gravy; it is mean to boil down bones and scraps. If gravy is wanted, gravy beef should be ordered. The rind should be cut off the bacon at least an inch thick,

and a crock of broken bread must always be kept to get mouldy for the honour of the house. Frying can only be done in lard in any respectable kitchen, and what number of oysters are required for a single patty we do not venture to estimate. Untidiness too, the constant companion of wastefulness, she has reduced to a science. Her cupboards are an alarming mixture of scraps, sauces, forgotten whites of eggs, and pots of dripping, together with raisins and cornflour, furniture-polish and blacklead.

Her destruction of articles of food is well matched by her treatment of the crockery and kitchen utensils in her charge. She warms the best china dinner-plates to a white heat. The dishes she puts into the oven, until their surface resembles that of the crackle porcelain admired by collectors. If they are adorned with arms or monograms in colour and gilding, she early discovers the efficacy of strong soda and soft soap in the removal of such vanities. A few dexterous movements will chip the edges on a stone sink, and she thinks it well to remove such excrescences as the handles of dishes or the tops of their covers; her reasons for these measures may be sanitary, as handles only form recesses for grease and dust, and it is impossible to clean them without trouble. Pudding basins she consumes in large numbers and uses butter-boats to feed the cat. The dishes she sends to table invariably soil the cloth, and are so full of gravy that they often spill on the way up stairs. The covers are smeared with greasy finger-marks, and it is well if the outside only is dirty. The kitchen is her fortress; from it drawing-room company is carefully and jealously excluded. In all families the children look upon the kitchen as a paradise of dainty devices. In some they are never allowed to enter it; but in others the little missy is sometimes privileged to make a bit of paste into ducks

and drakes, or to knead some dough into a cake for the doll's birthday. Such frivolities a modern cook sternly represses. She supposes the young ladies will want to make puddings next, or to come down and try recipes out of "them rubbishing books." She has no notion of encouraging such pranks. A favour has to be made of leave to use her bowls and spoons, and the young officer just home from his regiment dare not venture into the sacred precinct to concoct a real Indian curry or a Mulligatawny pillaw unless he has ascertained that cook is in a good humour. Even the lady of the house is informed very plainly that after her morning visit she is not expected to disturb the quiet of the lower regions. The trap is always missing from the kitchen sink, and things run into the drain which should never go there; the valve itself disappears among the ashes, and is carried away by the dust-cart, together with the stoppers of sauce bottles, the heads of pepper-casters, jam-pots and half-burnt coals. Indeed one might think that the cook had a personal interest in the dustman, and wished to bestow as many useful articles upon him as possible; or perhaps her benevolent feelings are stirred by some tale of the poor sorters in the cinder yards to whom these things are perquisites, and she would be charitable by proxy. She has a kind heart for all sorts of tramps, and frequently has her fortune told. The woman whose babies seem endowed with a perpetual youth, the man who sells pencils, the various folk who eke out a precarious livelihood by hawking mittens, combs, and pen-wipers, find in her a sympathetic patron, and draw from her large supplies of her master's bread and meat. A carrier, whose pony was more sleek and well-fed than carrier's ponies often are, confessed on one occasion that he obtained from the tramps in his neighbourhood their stores of crusts at one shilling a peck:—"Sometimes



I am almost inclined to pick out the pieces of cheese and meat, but Jack here eats it all up as sweet as can be, and his coat's like satin."

Her personal habits accord with her domestic and social qualities. She labours under a chronic hydrophobia, for though her thirst is unquenchable she carefully avoids cold water. Copious draughts of beer, occasionally varied in the afternoon with tea, and in the evening with gin, assist her in her work and support her exhausted frame. Personal ablutions she does not affect, but wipes her hands usually on the tablecloth, or whatever else is within her reach. Pudding-cloths are convenient for the purpose, and become so saturated with various animal oils, butter, fat, and lard, that they are devoured by the mice which, with flies, kittens, and blackbeetles, constitute the *fauna* of the kitchen. A small piece of broken looking-glass on the dresser enables her now and then to smooth her hair, the usual appearance of which suggests the occasional but scanty use of the blacking-brush. The chief efforts of her toilet upon week-days are made for the advent of the butcher's boy, but she is not given to wasting time in the decoration of her form. All her powers in this line are reserved for Sunday, when she turns out, as she confidently believes, quite the lady, her whole earnings being spent on the display, for she never saves out of her wages, and seems to live in the quiet expectation of a handsome legacy or a wealthy husband. Perhaps it is to this end that the hair, so untidy on Saturday, is now braided into shining rolls; the hands, yesterday so grimy, are covered with green leather gloves; the feet, which all the week have only worn slippers, are encased in tight and high-heeled boots, decorated with arabesques; and, to her great delight, she fondly thinks there is nothing of the cook about her. Those who have to submit to her professional shortcomings

may think there is no more of the cook about her on week-days. She despises her occupation, and can hardly therefore be expected to succeed in it. She looks upon her mistress as an unreasonable being, full of whims and fancies, which it is her duty to evade and thwart as often as possible. She explains to her young man, for cooks are never without sweet-hearts, that her people are a mean lot, that they buy from the Civil Service, make soup of distracted meat, and eat irritated bread, and that she means to give warning immediately.

“ BESSIE.”

It is possible to see good reasons why many people prefer women to men as attendants, and indulge only in a page as the representative of the domestic male. The maid is likely to be more civil and obliging than the footman, if less physically powerful. Her chief characteristics are neatness and clean hands. Indeed she sometimes rises to a calm dignity which is almost elegance. She puts everything by, she knows where everything is, except the corkscrew, which the page is held responsible for losing. You may strew her path with corkscrews, but she can never find one. And the reason is obvious ; drawing corks is too much for her strength and the attitude is unbecoming. Here the difference between a footman and a parlour-maid is at once apparent. She lays the table as neatly as a man and attends at it as well. She can give an intelligible answer at the hall-door, and will make an excuse to a caller or tell a fib with as unblushing a front as if her head were powdered and her shoulder bore a knot. She can brush her master's hat and can also mend his gloves. She can scold the postman, and can also propitiate him by allowing him to squeeze her hand at

the door and by asking for his Christmas-box when master is in a good humour. She has, in short, all the effrontery of the footman, with certain powers of pleasing and an appearance of modesty all her own. There is no fear of her admitting a troublesome visitor ; she does not smash more than a fair percentage of the table-glass ; her dress is always appropriate, and she does not rush to the door struggling into a coat or with her hair disordered.

In a strictly domestic aspect Bessie is not without her failings. It is perhaps her misfortune rather than her fault that she is not habitually truthful. No doubt she endeavours, as a rule, to make facts and words square with tolerable exactness ; but, if they do not square, she has little scruple in throwing aside such trammels, and lies perseveringly, unblushingly, and for the most part successfully. She can throw into her eyes an expression of candour such as only another woman would dare to question. Her character being marred by this weakness, she lives in a state of perpetual warfare with the cook, whose downright and coarser nature professes to detest a sham. A better reason may be found in the frequent rivalry of affection for the same carpenter or policeman, a rivalry embittered to the cook by the far better chances afforded to the parlour-maid. Proper as her outward demeanour is, she is a systematic flirt, and her adversary has but too good cause when she upbraids her with stolen kisses, surreptitious outings, and followers where no followers are allowed. But no one is immaculate, and Bessie's little failings may be left to her own conscience and the care of her spiritual adviser ; for, as a rule, she is pious, and may be heard singing the most devotional hymns as she sits darning the table-cloths. She is often of a literary turn. Her political organ is the *Daily Telegraph*. The *Times* she professes not to care for ; it is dull, and has no

news. She has her views upon strikes, Sunday museums, and the output of coal, and her historical knowledge has been carefully culled from Mme. Tussaud. If a volume of one of Mudie's best novels is missing, it will probably be found under Bessie's pillow, and a late breakfast may often be traced to the charms of the novelist. Bessie likes dinner-parties but hates afternoon tea, for she is rapacious of tips and does not approve of “quiet families.” The cook remarks, not perhaps quite without truth, that Bessie's head always aches the morning after there has been a dinner-party, and goes on to hint that the sherry was not all drunk in the dining-room. But Bessie can well afford to disregard these malevolent expressions, since she keeps the key of the beer, and sometimes that of the cellar likewise. How far she is under the domination of the lady of the house is a question not always easy to determine, but occasionally in a small family she unites the duties of ladies'-maid with those of butler and valet. In this case she probably rules the whole house, as she has the ear of both its heads, and exercises a benevolent but irresponsible tyranny analogous to that of the old family nurse of tradition and romance. Bessie settles matrimonial differences, takes care of the accounts, gives the cook warning, changes the grocer, scolds her master and mistress alternately, and keeps everybody in order by threatening to marry and give up service whenever she is crossed. She speaks of the family as “we,” talks of “our” house and “our” servants, and gives her opinion freely and openly on all that goes on. She is of course well acquainted with all family secrets, as she makes no scruple of reading letters. Lazy or busy people are very well satisfied with her, as she oils the machinery of life for them ; but a managing housekeeper, a second wife, or a bride, finds it impossible to get on with her long.

Under ordinary circumstances Bessie's relations with the page are of a complicated and delicate nature. He adores her openly, and vows that, if she will but wait, he will make her his wife. This worship she takes as a matter of course, and has the cruelty to employ her worshipper in little missions of a confidential character to his rivals in her affections. It is he who lets Tomkins know that Bessie will be accidentally at evening church next Sunday; it is he who watches Jones as he goes into two public-houses on his way home, and reports against him in consequence, not without a secret feeling of pleasure. In one melancholy case a parlour-maid for whom the page entertained a hopeless passion employed him to take a note for her to the footman of another family. What was the unhappy boy's distress to find that, by a coincidence which occurs seldom except in novels, his rival was his own big brother, who had so often thrashed him at home. Even here, however, no tragedy ensued, for the fickle Bessie eventually married a third sweetheart. It occasionally happens that the Buttons's love is so little returned that it becomes hate, and the strife is embittered by many a slapping, many a complaint to master, many a threat. But victory is not always on the side of the stronger, for pages have opportunities of mischief denied to other mortals, and are reckless in their revenge. In one case the unhappy Bessie had her head nearly split by a shutter ingeniously opened while she was stooping below. In another the gas was turned on in the pantry, and a small but sufficiently alarming explosion punished the offending maid. The page who starts from behind a door when Bessie is carrying the tray of glasses, or who lets off a soda-water bottle in her face, may also be mentioned with disapproval; but it must be allowed in extenuation that his provocation is often very great. The parlour-maid is not

above small tyrannies and petty spite, and if the page has a tenderness for her, it only makes his bondage the more bitter. But it frequently happens that their life is one of harmony. She may be good-tempered or really anxious to teach him; and, in consideration of the many little services he can render her, and the use she makes of his nimble legs in running her messages, she attends to his education, cultivates his manners, makes him read aloud to her, and corrects his pronunciation on some such principle as we overheard the other day:—"Don't say ax, you vulgar boy; say 'harsk.'"



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## A NICE FELLOW.

SELF-SACRIFICE of a certain kind has always great charms for women, provided it can be surrounded by a halo of romance. It is also desirable that the martyrdom should bring to its victim a liberal reward either in this world or the next. As society becomes more and more prosaic it is increasingly difficult to find any ideal sphere for self-devotion. Young ladies have discovered that nursing wounded soldiers is not the romantic employment which books of fiction led them to believe it. There it was represented as chiefly consisting in wiping fevered brows with scented pocket-handkerchiefs, cutting off chestnut-curls from marble foreheads, or receiving for themselves or others dying declarations of undying love. But even silly people now know that nursing in camps is unpleasantly hard work, requiring a strong body, trained hands, and well-restrained nerves. From Sisterhoods too the glory has departed, notwithstanding the becoming dress. Political economy is fast robbing even almsgiving and district-visiting of their former charms. For a fortunate few, however, there yet remains one sphere in which a young woman may make herself fairly miserable if she wishes to do penance for the good of her soul, without bidding for cloistered cell or ordering horse-hair underclothing. She may seize the opportunity, if it offers, of marrying a man popularly known among his acquaintances as a "nice fellow." It is curious how much of a person's character can sometimes be expressed by one epithet; and, on the other hand, what conflicting adjectives are used by different people with regard to the same



person. Girls with grown-up brothers have generally a reasonably correct notion of what is meant when an acquaintance is described as "first-rate," "stuck up," "famous," "queer," "rusty," and they know that to call a man "a good-enough fellow" is like describing a girl as amiable because there is nothing to say to her advantage as regards either intellect, accomplishments, or beauty. The same man may be in his father's eyes "a lazy dog," to his mother "a dear boy," with his sisters "a darling," to his brothers "an easy-going fellow," while his employer dubs him a useless fine gentleman. One often hears the same person called indifferently, according to the speaker, "able," "solemn," "grumpy," "sterling," "insufferable," "safe," "hard-working," "a screw," "a wet blanket," "a trump," "a prig," or "a treasure." "Nice," when applied to a man, has much the same significance as fashionable or attractive applied to a lady. None of these epithets vouch for anything beyond the surface ; but they imply a certain outward polish, which can be recognised in the nursery and traced from the cradle to the grave.

A nice baby allows itself to be kissed with little remonstrance, and will bear a great deal of hugging for the sake of the white woolly dog or the cart and horse which it sees in prospect when the ordeal is over. It does not cry when its mother leaves the room, and will permit its nurse to be changed any number of times without showing the least irritability, provided it finds its comforts carefully attended to by the new comer. It is a privilege to hear the dear little creature say its prayers and repeat the Evening Hymn with clasped hands and turned-up eyes ere it lays its head down to sleep, and let others sleep, till morning. Its hair keeps in curl, its pinafore remains clean for an incredible time, it does not sit on its sash, and it can scarcely be surprising that it is the idol of the

nursery. When the nice baby is old enough to go into the schoolroom his life is still a happy one, for the governess congratulates herself upon having so well-behaved a pupil, and makes his lessons as much like play as she can. At school his terms are peaceful, if not glorious ; for he never takes up the cause of the oppressed or defies boys stronger than himself. With characteristic good sense, he makes friends with the master's wife or the matron, as the case may be ; gives little trouble in regard to torn clothes or lost pocket-handkerchiefs ; and, in return for his conciliatory demeanour, secures indulgences and consideration denied to many more worthy boys. By some strange want of memory, he forgets to write home unless he wants something or has exceeded his allowance ; but then his letters are perfectly charming in the effervescence of affection and interest in family affairs. No son could be more eagerly welcomed in the holidays, for he is a model of good behaviour, never refusing to accompany his mother in afternoon calls when he is sure of plumcake and strawberries and cream, and never declining to let his sisters spend their little store of pocket-money in making him presents. Probably on leaving school he is anxious to go into the army, that happy hunting-ground for nice fellows ; but if his father refuses absolutely, and insists on his going to a university, he does not enlist as a private soldier or run away to sea. Nice fellows do not take kindly to grooming their own horses, and have too much affection for their hands to like them to be blistered by ropes. Amongst those who cannot get through their matriculation the nice fellow is sure to find his place, not from want of ability, but from sheer careless neglect of his work ; but then he is so penitent and profuse in his self-reproaches that it is impossible to say anything more condemnatory of his behaviour than he says of it himself. When he

finds it will be more comfortable to pass, he does so easily, but takes care not to read harder than is absolutely necessary, having no love of knowledge for its own sake, but only for the advantages it can command. As an undergraduate he is socially popular, for he can sing a song, play a waltz, take a hand at whist, drink without getting drunk, and will back bills which his father has to pay. He never misses a chapel, for he knows that regular attendance covers a multitude of sins; he wears his gown decorously on all proper occasions, and is never gated or Proctorized. At the university, as at school, a nice fellow is sure to exceed his allowance, but then he is always so well dressed and makes such pretty presents of flowers, books, or music, to his mother, sisters, and pretty cousins, that when the inevitable row comes they all stand by him. With perfect good humour the girls give up the tour they have been promised, or the singing and drawing lessons which they now see indefinitely postponed. They would do anything to get their favourite brother out of a scrape and pay his debts. They think papa very hard-hearted and unreasonable to expect old heads on young shoulders.

The nice fellow flirts and dances to perfection, and is welcome at all entertainments; but then, unfortunately, he is rarely "eligible," for if he were it would not be necessary to pay in amiability for social consideration. He is an ideal lover, writes the most romantic letters, takes unheard-of journeys to see the beloved one, and coaxes his mother out of her best jewelry to give in presents. It is chiefly, however, as a married man that the nice fellow is worthy of a moment's consideration; appearances and reality are so curiously at variance. One constantly hears surprise expressed as to one lady that she can be so devoted to her husband, who in society is such a stupid bear; whilst the same observer cannot understand why another lady seems so indifferent to her

husband, who is universally popular. No one intimately acquainted with the private life of the two households would probably feel any such astonishment.

A nice fellow as a husband retains his little endearing ways, particularly in public. He asks his wife if her feet are cold whether it is summer or winter, wraps her up in the hottest weather, and insists upon her eating when she is not in the least hungry. So long as poverty does not make itself felt, things go smoothly enough ; but then, alas ! nice fellows are scarcely ever rich, nor do they always marry for money, as one might reasonably expect. They constantly allow themselves to be carried away by what they are pleased to call love—a sentiment which might by ill-natured people be described as a selfish fancy. However well good looks and a charming manner may grease the wheels of society, they are painfully inadequate to smooth away the difficulties of making both ends meet upon a small income. The nice fellow is careful to mix himself up as little as possible with the vulgar troubles of economical household management. He professes himself so bad an arithmetician that he cannot add two and two together, so stupid about shopping that he does not know one animal from another when the fur or feathers are off, and so ignorant about expenses that there is no use in asking him to apportion his income. As to the allowance his wife is to have for household expenditure, he will consult Robinson, who is in the same office, and who has everything admirably arranged at home. This might be all very well if he would allow himself to know that Robinson helps his little delicate wife in a thousand ways, sympathizes with her in troubles which he will not permit himself to think trivial whilst they are heavy to her, and without any fuss finds out countless ways in which to gild the pill of poverty. But the nice fellow's theory is that everything comes right if you let it alone and don't

“bother.” When his wife foolishly consults him about her difficulties, he tells her that she is morbidly anxious, and ought to have a glass of wine and lie down on the sofa, instead of agitating herself about nothing. When there is a bad cook in the establishment, a nice fellow does not grumble, but adjourns to the club or a friend’s house where he is always welcome. When he returns he has a good story to tell his wife, and, if she does not seem very much interested in his doings, wonders how she can give way to her temper when he finds it always easier to be pleasant. The nice fellow is generally in bondage to appearances; he would rather his wife made herself ill by walking than that she should go in an omnibus, and is more particular about her dress than her comforts. It is disagreeable to him, however, to allow himself to think that she wants for anything; so he is always either buying her things he cannot afford or wondering why she herself does not buy them. When illness appears in the household the nice fellow takes care to keep out of the way, which perhaps is fortunate, as he makes the worst possible nurse, being incapable of that subtle sympathy which supplies ears and eyes and instinctive knowledge to an ignorant person with a heart. Perhaps he does his best when he stands at the foot of the patient’s bed and asks silly questions in a pretty manner which charms the maid, and offers all sorts of unsuitable things which he is sure the patient could eat if she tried.

With his children a nice fellow is sure to be as popular as with the outside world, for he does not make himself disagreeable by finding fault except now and then when they do something personally exasperating. All early training, and particularly punishment, ought, he considers, to be in a mother’s hands, and she alone should be responsible for the ultimate character of the children, as her influence must be so great. He is, however, always willing to be the

giver of presents or to arrange little treats, about which he will sometimes take a great deal of trouble. True, he never sat up with a child a single night in his whole life, nor would he remain in the room with a crying baby. It would be against his principles. Nor yet does he think it necessary to take any notice of the boys in the holidays, or to make impertinent investigations as to how the girls are getting on with their studies. What are tutors or governesses for if parents are to be troubled about education? It is much better to trust people, and then they are sure to do their best; every one dislikes interference. A nice fellow is always fond of his daughters if they are pretty, and very willing to take them about and leave their mother at home. He makes himself a delightful companion, and is pointed out as a model papa. If, however, his girls are ugly and heavy, he leaves them to take care of themselves, and establishes himself as escort in some family where there are pretty daughters. We must not be too hard upon him, for a really refined person cannot bear anything ugly or ungainly near him without positive pain, not even his own children. Why should he, when it is not necessary, and there are plenty of pretty pleasing people in the world?

A nice fellow never grows old and never gets more stupid than he was when young. He flirts mildly and calmly all his life, more to please the ladies, he says, than himself. Somehow he manages to retain his early friends and to acquire new ones, for he does not make ill-natured speeches and is always ready to be useful and obliging to strangers. Indeed the trouble he takes for people with whom he is scarcely acquainted is often a subject of some heart-burning to his unreasonable wife. When he dies, probably in debt and leaving his family unprovided for, countless friends rush to the rescue. They must do something for the poor widow and children of such a nice fellow.





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